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MARCH 1992

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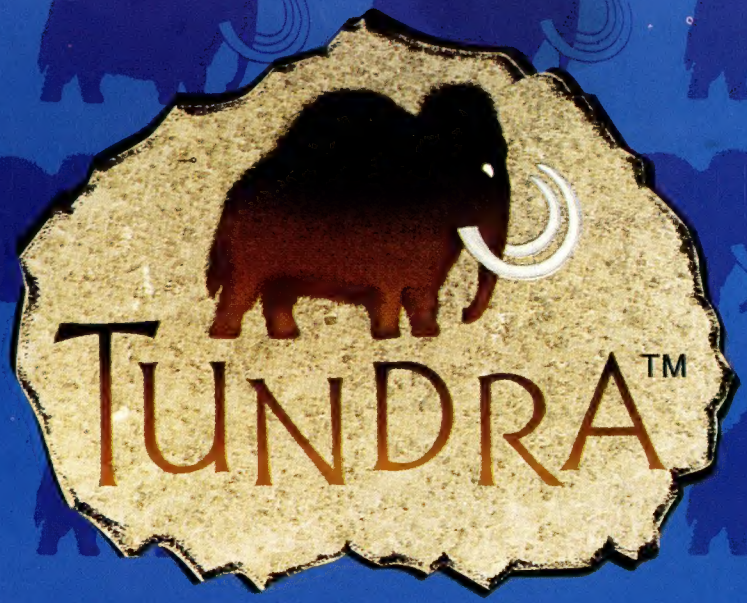

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Front Cover: Lord Tyler (from Melting Pot) and The Dominator. Painting by Simon Bisley (Tyler © Kevin Eastman, Dominator © Luke & Bisley)

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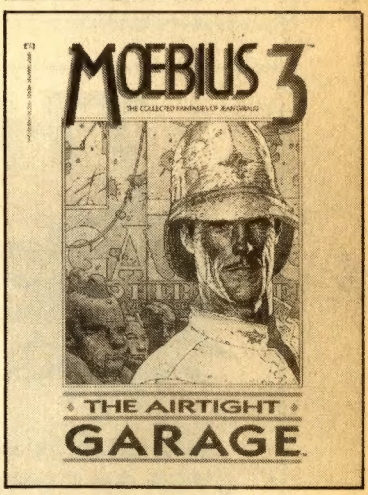


THE LAST few years have been weird ones for the industry. Comics were supposed to become respectable. There was a whole new audience out there just waiting for the time when they weren't an embarrassment to read on the train home. New comics were launched to cater for the new '90s men and women, caring, literate, and so modern they were only written ten minutes ago.

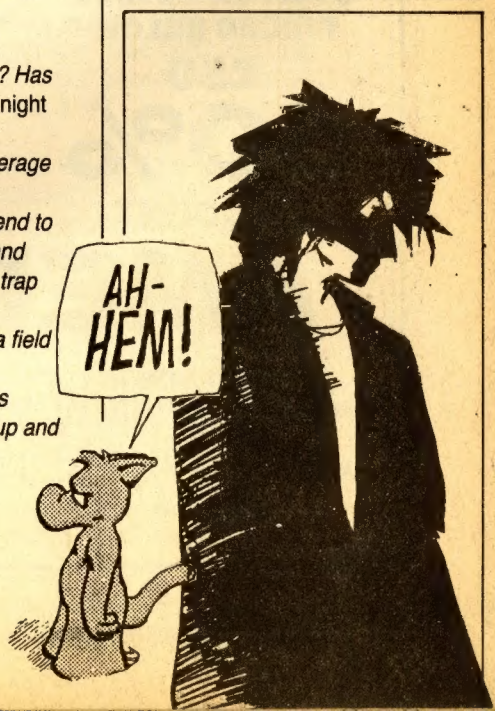
In the last ten years we've seen the publication of many titles that comic fans have been happy to hold up to the establishment and say 'Look, comics are genuine literature, genuine art'. There are storytelling tricks and devices you can't do elsewhere: moods and changes of pace that isn't possible in text fiction, and a budget for effects that's limited only by the imagination and not the film-set's accountant. There are both writers and artists in the comics world who can provoke their audience into genuine thought.

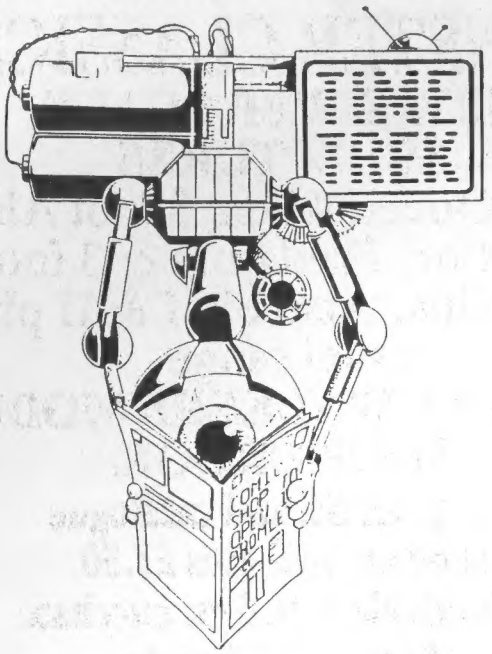
But have we tried to run before we can walk? Have comics become over-intellectualised by the media, or by the comics community (that's you, brother)? Has the man on the street been taught the difference between Batman: The Dark Knight Returns and The Beano. Both of them do an excellent job for their intended audience, but somehow we've got to differentiate the two in the mind of the average man.

So where does Comic Collector fit into the scheme of things? Well, we intend to cover comics in all their many forms. From cartoon to comic strip, Ally Sloper and Yellow Kid to the latest X-Men and Judge Dredd. We don't want to fall into the trap of cliquey pseudo-intellectualism, but present strong, accessible articles on all aspects of the comic strip, its history and those who continue to make comics a field that is growing in its scope and exploration of imaginative possibilities.

We've cast our net wide for the first issue, and the line-up for next month is taking shape fast. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank a few people: stand up and take a bow, Messrs. Simon Bisley (for a stunning cover), Stuart Green, Lance Rickman and Biff of A.C.E. comics, and Rachel, too.

See you next month.





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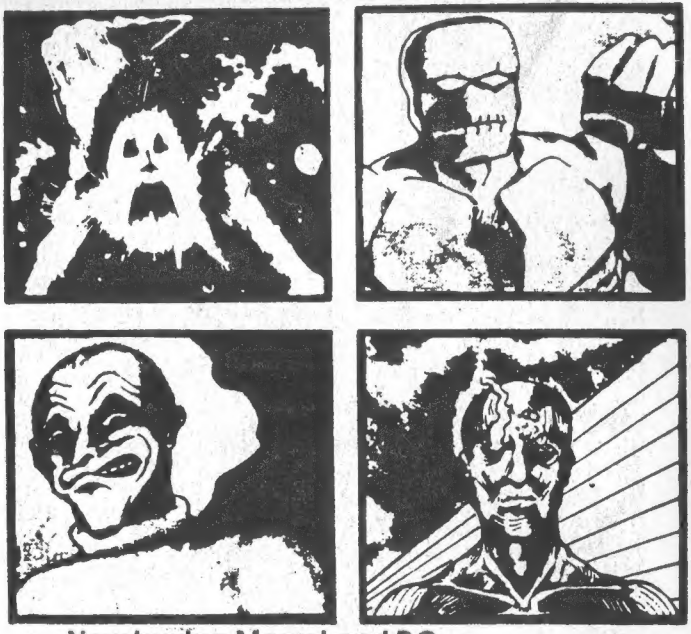

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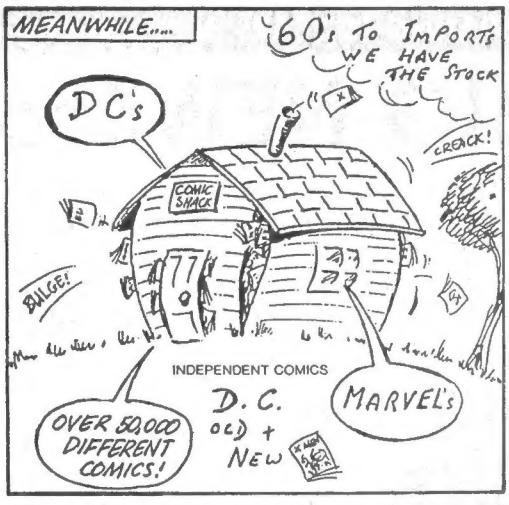

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BRITISH NEWS

Like some mysterious breathing apparatus, the British comics industry continues to contract and expand alternatively. Following in the wake of last years collapse of titles, which saw the demise of *Crisis, Toxic!, Blast!, Meltdown*, and various graphic novel lines, the new year bas brought with it new plans, new launches and new companies.

First off the running blocks will be Tundra Publishing UK, whose line-up promises to be a who's who of British and American talent. Tundra are under the guiding hand of Dave Elliott, co-editor of *Atomeka Press' A1* anthology, ex-editor for John Brown Publishing, and also currently editing a new anthology title for the Epic line in the USA.

Joining him are Helen Carter, Stuart Green (ex-*Speakeasy, Blast!*), Steve White (ex-*Marvel UK*) and others. For more details see our feature this issue.

Dark Horse are setting up U.K. offices, with Michael Bennett (ex-*Xpresso*) in charge. No official statement has yet been received about product, although the strong film tie-in line published by Dark Horse in America – including Aliens (which also includes reprints of Predator) and Terminator – are currently being reprinted in magazine format by Trident in the UK.

Trident's latest title, *Freddy's Dreams*, released mid-January, reprints stories from Innovation's *Nightmare on Elm Street* and *Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare* adapting the final Freddy Krueger film.

FLEETWAY TAKEOVER

FLEETWAY

On January 16 1992, British comics giants Fleetway Editions were fully taken over by the Danish company Gutenberghus Press.

Fleetway, which began life as the Amalgamated Press in 1904, has the longest history as comics publishers in the UK, dating back to May 1890 when founder, Alfred Harmsworth, issued his first comic title, *Comic Cuts*.

The takeover involves all copyrights to the *2000AD* group as well as other comic interests (*Eagle, Roy of the Rovers*, etc), the Disney franchise taken over by Maxwell in October 1990, interests in the Dan Dare TV series mooted for 1993 and the long-awaited Judge Dredd Movie.

Over the years, company buy-outs and corporate takeovers meant that Amalgamated Press first became Fleetway Publications in the late 1950's, then part of I.P.C. Magazines in September 1968. In July 1987 the company was bought by Maxwell's Pergamon BPCC Publishing, and renamed Fleetway Publications Ltd.; control switching in 1988 to fall under the wing of Maxwell Consumer Publications and Communications Ltd., in the wake of BPCC's sale.

At the end of October 1991, about ten days before the death of Robert Maxwell on November 5, Fleetway was merged with London Editions, that company having been purchased by Gutenberghus. The 50/50 sharing of the newly named Fleetway Editions Ltd. took effect from January 1 1992, the new company housed within Maxwell's Greater London House offices.

Speaking for Fleetway just before the announcement of the takeover, Igor Goldkind said, "We are now a fully comics-based company, publishing no other consumer magazines, which is a major step, certainly for *2000AD* and the other comics in the new group. With the merger with London Editions, Fleetway Editions now represents 60 to 70 per cent of the comics market in this country.

"Profits from the comics are no longer being used to subsidise other publications. *2000AD* and its related publications has always been a major money-spinner, so it will be good to see the comics keeping the money that Fleetway do make."

FLEETWAY EDITIONS

Rumours that Fleetway was in trouble due to the increasingly obvious financial insecurity of the Maxwell empire were quickly scotched by Goldkind: "I've heard rumours that *2000AD* was going to fold and someone from the retailers asked if *Judgement on Gotham* was not being distributed due to Maxwell problems, but that's all scuttlebut. Business is normal. Fleetway Editions is here to stay."

The magazine edition of *Judgement on Gotham* was released as planned on January 9, and new launches are planned for this year, the first of which will be the *Complete Judge Dredd*, a chronological reprinting of every Dredd story from the very first tale in *2000AD Prog 2* (March 5, 1977).

On the subject of the planned expansion of Fleetway, Goldkind said: "I think the main advantage of Gutenberghus Press is that it opens up the very difficult European market. British publishing in general has been isolated and cut-off from the European market, in publishing as in every other sector. Having Gutenberghus Press with an interest means that Fleetway Editions is a European publisher now including Britain and it's going to make that bridge that much easier.

"We will certainly be going through Gutenberghus distribution networks as well as our traditional networks, and Gutenberghus is a very agressive company, very interested in the American market. I think we are going to see a much more concentrated marketing scheme for getting British comics into America now."

Continued overleaf ▶

MARVEL UK ANNOUNCE NEW TITLES

In the wake of the success of the* Death's Head II *series, Marvel UK have announced a new fortnightly, reflecting the new transatlantic co-operation between Marvel and the parent American company.

Death's Head was chosen as part of the US Marvel's Big Guns promotion, and has solicited 195,000 sales in direct sales outlets alone.

The new Marvel UK series will have the umbrella title Genesis 1992 and will introduce five new characters to the British and American markets. The fortnightly comic will be released on April 11 and will contain five new British super-heroes. Each of these characters will also star in his/her own American comic books.

The individual titles are:* Hell's Angel, Motormouth, Warheads, Pendragon II *(following the success of the* Knights of Pendragon *monthly) and* Digitek. ***The new Marvel UK Universe will be solidly connected to the existing Marvel Universe, with guest appearances promised from the X-Men, Dr. Strange, The Fantastic Four, Nick Fury and many others.

The common thread through the new stories is the MyS-TECH organisation, which will act as the basis for the continuity of the Genesis '92 titles.

A full preview of the Genesis '92 programme will appear in our next issue.

▸ FLEETWAY TAKOVER (*Cont*)

Upcoming comics and events

Red Dwarf Magazine will be Fleetway Edition's first all-new publication. Based on the popular BBC-TV series, the first issue is launched on February 27, one week after a new six-part TV series begins.

The *Judge Dredd Megazine* continues as a monthly title until issue 20 before increasing schedule to fortnightly publication, numbered Volume 2 number 1 (on sale May 2, 1992). 40 pages, priced £1.00. All new stories and features. Alan Grant is writing a new series entitled 'Armageddon'. John Smith and Sean Phillips are producing a horror series. *Comic Collector* previews the new series' next issue.

2000AD. Carries on much the same. 'Finn' is added to the lineup with Prog 770, centred around an occult battle with the Ancient Gods of the Deep; 'The Clown' begins Prog 774; 'Tales from Beyond Science' (a series of one-off stories in the vein of Tharg's Future Shocks) begins Prog 774.

Prog 780 is the 15th Anniversary number (continuing the tradition within the comic to count a year as 52 issues rather than relying on the actual date), and features the return of the ABC Warriors (Book 2 of Khronicles of Khaos storyline by writers Pat Mills/ Tony Skinner and artist Kevin Walker), Rogue Trooper and a new series, 'Button Man' by John Wagner and Arthur Ranson. A special surprise revival of a 'true mega-star' is also promised.

The 15th Anniversary party is to be held at Camden Palace on February 27 between 10pm and 3am. Fleetway Editions are sponsoring a musical event with bands, DJ's and a stage show, which will involve images of *2000AD* characters in laser. Tickets for the event will be priced £5.00 in advance, £6.00 at the door. The show is open to over 18's only.

Once the costs of the event are covered, all profits are to be donated to the Great Ormand Street Children's Hospital.

I'LL BE BACK, AGAIN

Just as Skynet and the Terminators are on the brink of defeat at the hands of the resistance led by John Connor, a second sentient computer stirs in the shattered Soviet Union. And worse, the new breed of infiltration unit created to penetrate the Soviet resistance are based on real people, perfect replicas with the same faces, fingerprints, memories, and personalities. New stealth circuitry makes them impossible to detect . . . until it's too late!

The Terminator: Hunters and Killers *is a 3-issue, 32 page colour series scripted by Toren (*The Dirty Pair*) Smith, pencils by Bill (*Sable, X-Men*) Jaaska and inks by Dan (*Legion of Night*) Panosian. Colour is provided by Joe Rosas, and fully-painted covers by top rock illustrator, John Taylor Dismukes. Issue 1 ships March 31.*

***Hard Looks** is a new bi-monthly, adapting the hard-boiled short stories of Andrew Vachss, author of* Flood, Blue Belle *and* Sacrifice. *The first 32 page b&w issue features four stories, including 'Hostage' by Neal Barrett, Jr. & Gary Gianni, 'Unwritten Law' by Barbara Kesel, 'Dumping Ground' by Dave Gibbons, and 'Statue of Limitations', a previously unpublished tale by Vachss, illustrated by Tim Bradstreet.*

***Hard Boiled 3** finally sees the light of day on March 3. The long-delayed finale to Frank Miller and Geof Darrow's magazine format carnage, with blood and brains tastefully coloured by Claude Legris. $5.95.*

Frank Miller provides a 21 page instalment of 'Sin City' to Dark Horse Presents 60 *as Marv confronts Goldie's killer; Oxel Karnhus, 'The Creep', buys a gun, as chronicled by John Arcudi (writer) and Dale Eaglesham (art); and the 'Earth Boys' return to Earth . . . only Earth has changed its name to avoid any association with the boys! Writers are Brett Brooks and Cliff Biggers with art by David Johnson. 32 b&w pages for $2.25, shipping March 3.*

Norbert, *the cybernetic Alien, is sent into the heart of the Alien hive to steal the galaxy's ultimate drug, the Queen's royal jelly.* Aliens: Hive 2 *(of 4) is written by Jerry Prosser, pencilled and inked by Kelley Jones, and painted by Les Dorcheid. 32 pages, shipping March 17.*

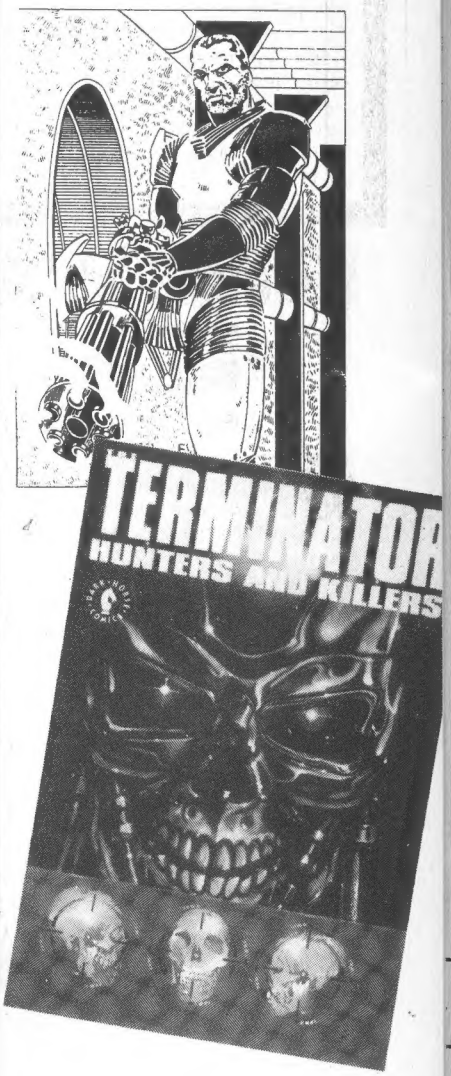
Cyberantics *is a hardcover companion to* Aliens: Hive, *written by Stanislaw Mayakovsky (Jerry Prosser). It contains information and details of the experiments and characters that appear in the* Hive *mini-series, a biography of the 'author' and illustrations by Rick Geary. The 56 pages are b&w with red highlights. Priced at $14.95, the book ships March 31.*

The Venus Wars 12 *is a 48 page no ads special, shipping March 3. Miranda, Ken Seno's Battlebike Team Queen, joins forces with the Hound Battalion as a full Ishtarian armoured division rolls toward a helpless Aphrodian refugee camp. Story and art by Yoshikazu Yashuhiko.*

John Byrne provides super-hero action in Next Men 2, *entitled 'Worldview'. Pure Byrne, apart from colours provided by Matt Webb,* Next Men *ships March 17.*

A prequel to the popular Outlanders series, the 40 page b&w Outlanders 0, *features 'The Key of Graciale' by Johji Manabe, and sets Princess Kham the task of retrieving a magical key to the gates of the Dimension of the Dead. Ships March 10.*

Chevel Noir 28 *features chapter 3 of Moebius' 'The Man From the Ciguri', the sequel to the classic 'Airtight Garage'. Also included are chapter 5 of 'Treeheart' by Comes, plus tales by Makyo & Rossi, David Lynch, Phil Elliott and Douglas Wheeler & Bernie Mirault. Ships March 10. 32 pages for $2.95.*



Young Indiana Jones heads south of the New Mexico Border on March 31 in the 32 page colour Young Indiana Jones Chronicles *by Dan Barry, adapting the ABC TV movie that launched the new TV series.*

Jacques Tardi's The Secret of the Salamander *is a 48 page b&w one-off featuring Adele Blanc-Sec. See our feature on Euro comics for more information on Tardi, then check out his work on March 31. $2.95.*

MALIBU GRAPHICS

Malibu begin a series of Tarzan related projects which will include mini-series', graphic albums and one-shots by a variety of creators in March with the release of Tarzan the Warrior. Issue one comes complete with Simon Bisley cover, written by Marc (Breathtaker) Wheatley and illustrated by Neil Vokes & Marc Hempel. This is an authorised continuation of the famous Edgar Rice Burroughs character, bringing Tarzan into the 1990's: "Our Tarzan doesn't necessarily swing from trees," says writer Wheatley. "Readers today demand a deeper characterisation, fully realised backgrounds and supporting cast and stories that revolve around extreme dramatic conflict." The $2.50 title is coloured by Aliens *colourist, Damon Willis.*

Youngblood 2 *(of 3) continues Rob Liefeld's Next Generation of Super-Heroes, and contains two more trading cards from the limited edition Youngblood Trading Card Set. Priced $2.50.*

Malibu have just announced orders of 307,000 for Youngblood I, *and a new Impact Comics line with new characters created by Liefeld, Todd McFarlane, Erik Larson, Jim Valentino, and others.*

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MARVEL VAMP IT UP FOR '92

NEW THANOS, CABLE, GHOST RIDER TITLES ANNOUNCED

There are a number of Marvel anniversary celebrations coming up in 1992. The most prominent of these will be Spider-Man's 30th anniversary, with tie-in events and special projects planned throughout the year.

More anniversary issues for 1992 include *Thor 450, Captain America 400* and *Avengers 350*. The Epic Comics imprint, currently being reorganised, will celebrate its 10th year, and will publish several new series and one-shots.

Pursuing their stated aim of increasing Marvel's market share, there will be many more US Marvel titles in the forthcoming year, well over 150 every month. In addition to the new ongoing *Punisher: War Zone* and *Cage* series, are a *Nomad* series, starring the former sidekick of Captain America, a second ongoing *Ghost Rider* series, a title starring Silver Sable and The Wild Pack (from *Amazing Spider-Man*), and a range of new horror/adventure titles.

The Marvel 2093 range of titles will be launched in September, and the long-awaited solo Cable title is also confirmed, although as yet unscheduled.

Crossovers

After the end of the current Galactic Storm Avengers family crossover series, there are more multi-title crossovers planned. There will be a summer horror promotion entitled *Rise of the Midnight Sons*, which centres on hot-seller Ghost Rider. *The Infinity Wars* is a crossover storyline by Jim Starlin which will run from April to September and features Thanos, Adam Warlock and the Infinity Watch, Galactus, the Silver Surfer and Dr. Strange.

This year there are six different crossover storylines running through the summer annuals, which will include several first issues. Each story will involve a maximum of four titles.

Continuing their announced policy of expanding their customer base (so far with titles like *Yuppies From Hell, Barbie, NFL Superpro*, and TV tie-ins like *Kid'n'Play, Bill and Ted* and *James Bond, Jr.*), there will be more sports, educational and TV titles. The first of the new sports titles, *World Wrestling Federation*, will be on the shelves as you read this.

Because Marvel loses money every year on their subscription service, they will be reorganising the entire system, apparently phasing out subscriber's discounts. And also as promised, Marvel are moving into retail of their own products. The first Marvel-owned, all-Marvel product retail shops should open next year in New York and Los Angeles.

Forthcoming Marvel titles

MARCH: *Nomad* is a new ongoing monthly series, written by Fabian Nicieza, pencilled alternately by S. Clarke Hawbaker and Kirk Jarvinen, and inked by Mark McKenna.

Nomad – solo from March

The book is in the $1.75 Mando format, and the summer issues will form part of a cross-over storyline with *Daredevil* and *Punisher War Journal*. *The Punisher: Blood and Glory* is a 3-issue series co-starring Captain America in a drug-busting storyline.

Written by Dan Chichester and Margaret Clark, pencilled and inked by Klaus Janson, the series is in the $4.95 bookshelf format.

APRIL: *Silver Sable* will be an ongoing monthly title featuring the popular character from *Amazing Spider-Man*. Her mercenary group, the Wild Pack will include a rotating cast of villainous guest-stars, including Paladin, The Sandman and The Torpedo. Written by George Caragonne, pencilled by Joe Quesada and inked by Jan Harps, the title is in the standard $1.25 newsprint format.

The Job is a $1.25 4-issue newsprint series about the lives of two ordinary cops in New York. Written by ex-cop Joe Jusko and Larry Hama, pencilled by Mike Harris and inked by Jimmy Palmiotti, with covers by Mike Golden.

The Infinity Wars is a follow-up to the successful *Infinity Gauntlet*, and again features Thanos, as well as a new villain. There will be extensive crossovers throughout the Marvel universe for this 6-issue $2.50 series, written by Jim Starlin and pencilled by Ron Lim (inker to be announced).

MAY: *Terror, Inc.* is about a supernatural assaassin with the power to steal the limbs of others and attach them to his body, gaining their special abilities until they decay. Written by Dan Chichester and illustrated by Jorge Zaffino, the 5-issue mini-series is in the $1.75 Hudson format.

Terminator 2: Time Bomb is a 4-issue $1.75 Mando series set between the first and second Terminator movies. Written by Evan Skolnik, with artists yet to be determined.

JUNE: *Spirits of Vengeance* is the second regular Ghost Rider series, an ongoing Mando $1.75 title which will co-star the original Ghost Rider, Johnny Blaze. Written by Howard Mackie and illustrated by Adam Kubert.

There will be another $3.95 magazine-format *Marvel Swimsuit Special* in 1992, again featuring pinups by various artists.

Spirits of Vengeance – more Ghost Rider

JULY: *Morbius the Living Vampire* is an ongoing monthly title written by Len Kaminski, pencilled by Ron Wagner and inked by Mike Witherby. The book is in the $1.75 Mando format. Early guest stars will include Spider-Man, The Punisher and Wolverine.

Morbius – part of Marvel's summer horror line-up

AUGUST: *Darkhold* is an ongoing monthly supernatural thriller about a young woman whose family have been guardians of a cursed book for generations and the interpol agent assigned to aid her.

Written by Christian Cooper, pencilled by Richard Case and inked by Mark McKenna, the title will be in the $1.75 Mando format.

Nightstalkers . . . out of the Tomb of Dracula.

SEPTEMBER: *Nightstalkers* features Frank Drake, Hannibal King and Blade, the supporting characters from the recent *Tomb of Dracula* mini-series. Written by Don Chichester, pencilled by Ron Garney and inked by Tom Palmer, the monthly series is in the $1.75 Mando format.

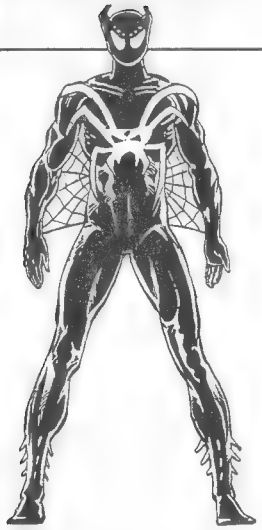
OCTOBER: *Ghost Rider: Fear* is written by Howard Mackie, pencilled by Lee Weeks and inked by Al Williamson. The story pits the Ghost Rider and Captain America against a new, more macabre Scarecrow. The one-shot is a $4.95 bookshelf special.

NOVEMBER: *Hell Storm* is an ongoing monthly series written by Rafael Nieves and illustrated by Michael Bair, featuring the revamped Daimon Hellstrom, son of a demon father and human mother. The title is in the $1.75 Mando format.

DECEMBER: *There will be another $3.95 magazine-format Marvel 1992 Year in Review*, featuring spoof articles, interviews and adverts.

Marvel 2093 will be a range of comics featuring future counterparts of the existing Marvel Universe characters, in a similar way to the recent Guardians of the Galaxy issues. The four initial titles announced will be *Spider-Man 2093, Doom 2093,* and *Punisher 2093* (each with a recognisable but futuristic version of the usual costume), and *Ravage 2093*, the first of a completely new set of heroes.

In overall charge of the 2093 Universe is editor Joey Cavalieri but none of the titles have had their creative teams assigned yet, other than *Ravage* which is to be written by Stan Lee.



Spider-Man 2093 will ship in September, *Doom* in October, *Ravage* in November and *Punisher* in December. Each will be monthly, in the $1.25 newsprint standard format.

As Yet Unscheduled

★ Cable will star in his own 4-part series, written and illustrated by Rob Liefeld, and revealing more about his past and his reasons for forming X-Force. The title will be in the $1.25 format.

★ *Dinosaurs* will be an illustrated history of the prehistoric era by various writers and illustrators, including John Bolton and Paul Johnson. 4-issue series will be in the $4.95 bookshelf format.

★ *Slapstick* is a 4-issue humour mini-series about a teenager who is transformed into a 'toon' who can be crushed, flattened or blown up and still pop back into shape. Written by Len Kaminski, pencilled by James Fry and inked by Terry Austin, the price and format are still to be announced.

★ *Beverly Hills 90210* will be an ongoing $1.25 newsprint series based on the Fox Network TV show. No creators as yet.

1992 Crossovers

'Rise of the Midnight Sons' will be a cross-over storyline running from June to September this summer, in which the supernatural guardians of the Marvel Universe combine to battle Lelith, the ancient mother of all evil.

It will be centred on the existing *Ghost Rider* series issues 28 and 31 (guest-starring Dr. Strange) and involve early issues of many of the new horror-adventure titles detailed above, namely Spirits of *Vengeance 1, Morbius 1, Darkhold 1,* and *Nightstalkers 1. Ghost Rider 29–30* and *Spirits of Vengeance 2* and *3* are also linked to the story line but are not full-blown crossovers.

'The Infinity Wars' will be a follow-up to last year's Infinity Gauntlet, and will be centred on the 6-issue *Infinity Wars* series by Jim Starlin and Ron Lim. In the story, Thanos and Warlock's Infinity Watch team up against an inter-dimensional mastermind threatening will include Thanos, Adam Warlock, The X-Men, The Avengers, X-Force, The Silver Surfer, Galactus, Nova, Daredevil, The West Coast Avengers, X-Factor, The New Warriors, Alpha Flight, Namor, Thor, Dr. Strange, Darkhawk, Dr. Doom and Kang the Conqueror.

The Storyline will begin in April issues and continue through to September.

There will be the usual Annual crossovers this year, involving 23 annuals which will be grouped into six storylines, each with no more than four chapters:

'Shattershot' (a tale re-introducing Longshot to the X-Men titles). February and March: *X-Men Annual 1, Uncanny X-Men Annual 16, X-Factor Annual 7* and *X-Force Annual 1.*

'The Return of the Defenders'. March and April: *Incredible Hulk Annual 18, Namor Annual 2, Silver Surfer Annual 5* and *Doctor Strange Annual 3.*

'The System Bytes'. April to May: *Punisher Annual 5, Daredevil Annual 8, Wonder Man Annual 1* and *Guardians of the Galaxy Annual 2.*

'Assault on Armor City'. May to June: *Darkhawk Annual 1, West Coast Avengers Annual 7* and *Iron Man Annual 13.*

'The Hero Killers' (tentative title). June: *Amazing Spider-Man Annual 26, Spectacular Spider-Man Annual 12, Web of Spider-Man Annual 8* and *New Warriors Annual 2.*

'Citizen Kang'. July: *Avengers Annual 21, Captain America Annual 11, Thor Annual 17* and *Fantastic Four Annual 25.*

Cable 4-part mini-series from Rob Liefeld

Marvel Movie News

NEWS OF the big-budget Spider-Man feature film has been well received, due largely to the involvement of James Cameron and his Lightstorm Entertainment production company.

There is a planned release date of Christmas 1992. Further, the long-rumoured X-Men movie has been given the go-ahead at Carolco Pictures, and is scheduled for release towards the end of 1994.

There are also reports of a She-Hulk movie starring Brigitte Nielsen, although only in the basic storyline stage, while The Black Panther has been optioned by Columbia (recently sold to the Japanese and now called Sony Pictures), and could feature Wesley (New Jack City) Snipes in the lead role.

EPIC NEWS

MARCH: 67 Seconds *is a $10.95 graphic novel about the relationship between a female reporter and a male photographer, told in a series of flashbacks during the 67 seconds when he must attempt to save the reporter's life. Written by James Robinson and illustrated by Steve Yeowell.*

APRIL: There will be a second Tales from the Hart *volume, a $2.95 newsprint one-shot titled* Bloodlines, *set against the reign of the dictator President Bokassa. Written by Cindy Goff and Rafael Nieves, illustrated by Seitu Hayden, and painted cover by Denys Cowan.*

Sinking *is a $9.95 graphic novel dealing with schizophrenia, written by James Hudnall and painted by Rob Ortaleza, shipping in Spring.*

MAY: The Civil War *is a set of four $4.95 one-shot bookshelf specials focusing on the four most important battles of the American Civil War: Shiloe, Bull Run, Antietam and Gettysburg. The battles are told in historical fiction, backed up with maps and historical data and written by William Messner-Loebs and Will Shetterly and pencilled by George Woodbridge, Gray Morrow and Angelo Torres (with various inkers).*

The four one-shots will be released simultaneously.

The Way of the Sorcerer *is a $5.95 bookshelf one-shot written by Franz Henckel and illustrated by Mike Dringenberg, a mystical thriller about a torturer and one of his victims, a sorcerer. Shipping in Summer.*

Hellraiser: *There will be several new Hellraiser tie-ins for 1992. There will be further issues of* Hellraiser: Book of the Damned, *a $4.95 bookshelf format title published twice a year, written by Dan Chichester with various illustrators (issue 2 will ship in March).*

There will also be four one-shot bookshelf specials: The Hellraiser Summer Special *(48 pages);* The Hellraiser Holiday Special *(64 pages, shipping Halloween or Christmas);* Hellraiser: Gone with the Wind *(48 pages), written by Neil Gaiman and Pete Atkins, writer of the* Hellraiser II *and* III *movie adaptations, dealing with the final fate of Kirstie, the heroine of the first two movies; and* Hellraiser III, *adapting the third movie currently in production, also written by Atkins.*

The following Epic titles have no definite release dates;

Tek World *is an ongoing $2.25 Mando monthly based on, and initially adapting, the* Tekwar *and* Tek World *science fiction novels of William*

(Captain Kirk) Shatner, and starring the central character of the books, private detective Jake Cardigan.

The series will be written by Ron Goulart and Shatner, pencilled by Kevin Maguire and inked by Jeff Albrecht.

Robot City is a 3-issue bookshelf series based in the same universe as Isaac Asimov's classic robot stories. The series is written by Doug Murray and illustrated by Paul Rivoche, of Mister X fame.

Tek World, based on William Shatner novel

Mutatis is a 3-issue $2.25 Mando series written by Dan Abnett and Andy Lanning and illustrated by John Higgins, a science fiction horror tale about a deadly virus that infects and then mutates the inhabitants of an underwater research complex in the near future.

Akira: following the final issue of the popular Japanese cyberpunk thriller (issue 37), there will be two further issues, the first containing Japanese promotional artwork, posters, adverts, pin-ups and interviews unseen by western readers, the second containing tributes to the series and its creator from a host of western writers and artists, including Moebius, Mike Mignola, Ann Noncenti, John Byrne, Jo Duffy, Ted McKeever and George Perez.

Following this, there will be a series of 32-page $2.25 one-shots written and illustrated by the creator of Akira, Katsuhiro Otomo. The first two of these will be Farewell to Weapons, the story of a small unit of combat-suited soldiers involved in middle-Eastern skirmishes following World War IV, and Memories, a moody story about a group of travellers and a mummified corpse laying in state on a vessel travelling through the void of space.

Alien Legion will return in two new titles: a $4.50 4-issue bookshelf series subtitled One Planet At A Time, in which Nomad squadron encounter the Vreel, a legendary race of invincible warriors (written by Chuck Dixon and pencilled by Doug Braithwaite with inker to be determined), and an as-yet untitled one-shot starring Jugger Grimrod (written by Dixon and illustrated by Mike McMahon).

A1: Dave Elliott brings the British anthology series to the Epic imprint as a 4-issue full-colour series in the $4.95 bookshelf format, and will also be editing a second 4-issue anthology in the same format, called simply Epic, containing new episodes of various Epic titles, including Nightbreed, Hellraiser, Dreadlands, Wild Cards, Stalkers, Alien Legion, Cholly and Flytrap and Captain Confederacy.

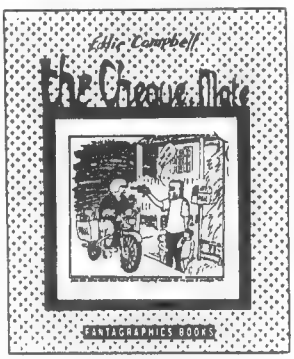
Sam & Max, Freelance Police: Steve Purcell's humorous duo move to Epic with two full-colour $4.50 bookshelf one-shots. The first is Sam & Max, Freelance Police Color Special, and the second, a new 64-pager called Sam & Max, Freelance Police Go to the Moon.

FANTOGRAPHICS

Love and Rockets heads towards its tenth anniversary at Fantographics with issue 38 seeing all three stories by Los Bros Hernandez approaching their respective conclusions.

The Robert Crumb Sketchbook Volume 1 contains sketches from 1964–65 previously unseen in the US or in Europe, where five volumes of sketches are already available in Germany. Fantographics, who publish The Complete Crumb Comics, plan to issue the Sketchbook series at the rate of three volumes a year. Three formats are available: a 180 page trade paperback with colour section at $10.95, a hardcover edition at $35.00; and a signed and numbered hardcover at $75.00.

The Cheque, Mate 1 is a collection of new and rare stories by Eddie Campbell in a 40-page magazine with card covers, priced $3.50, including tales of Alec, the previously unpublished 'How to Avoid Sex' and more.



The Cheque, Mate by Eddie Campbell

Pictopia 2 includes a wraparound cover and a full colour story by Kim Deitch. Other features include strips by Jirn Woodring, Dennis Rich & Geoffrey Seymour, Nina Paley, Jis, Brian Sandelback and Scott Gilbert. Also beginning this issue is a three part hard-boiled PI strip, 'Griffu', by Jacques Tardi and Patrick Manchette.

ADVENTURE COMICS

March sees the release of Dawn of the Reanimator 1, a 4-issue mini-series prequel to the Re-Animator film.

Herbert West tries to convince the Swiss authorities that he was trying to revive Dr. Hans Gruber, and was not responsible for his bizarre death. West tries to exhume the body, only to find someone has beaten him to it. Written by Bill Spangler with art by Jose Malaga, the first issue sports a cover by Nightmare on Elm Street artist, Tony Harris.

A one-shot Planet of the Apes: Sins of the Fathers special is a prequel to the Planet of the Apes series also published by Adventure.

In April comes The Return of Rust in full colour with original creator Steve Miller back in the writer's seat. Miller left the title after a dispute with original publishers, Now Comics, who published two series' of the title between 1987 and 1989. When Now filed for bankruptcy, Miller, and Adventure (Malibu Graphics), stepped in to secure the title; with penciller Philip Hester and inker Ande Parks, Miller reestablishes Scott baker's origin and heads off into new adventures.

AIRCEL COMICS

Aircel are reducing the number of adult-only comics they produce from March 1992. Titles such as Hardball are cancelled in favour of mature readers stories Galaxina and the new Flesh Gordon 1, released in March, an authorised sequel to the film.

A limited edition special will contain the art for the regular comic plus a preview of the new Flesh Gordon film, Flash Gordon Meets the Cosmic Cheerleaders, behind a foil-embossed cover.

TUNDRA PUBLISHING

Margot in Badtown is the first in a series of 56 page full-colour hardcover graphic novels in European Album format, priced $14.95.

Badtown is New York, and Margot a displaced Texan who accepts a job with a local construction company – evicting destitute families. She doesn't take to the work – in fact she's mad as hell! Jerome Charyn & Massimiliano Frezzato provide the action.

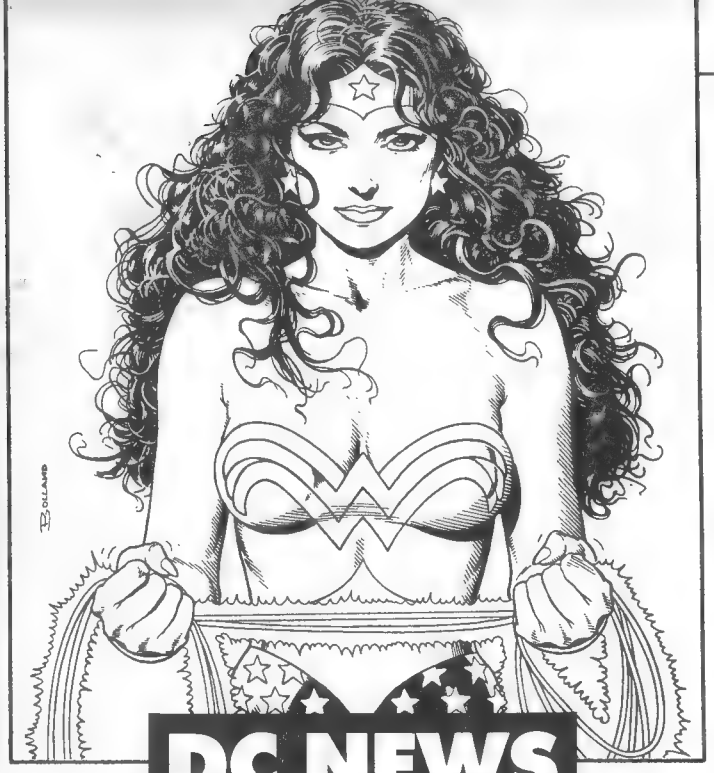
James O'Barr's The Crow 2 continues the reprinting of the Caliber title, building up to the next issues, previously unseen climax. The 64-page b&w title reprints issues 3 and 4, and is priced $4.95.

With a title like Madman you can be sure that Michael Dalton Aldred's hero isn't going to be a run-of-the-mill costumed superhero. And when you secret weapon is a weighted Duncan yo-yo you get the idea the name might be the only thing right about the bloke. 48 pages, b&w for $3.95.

HARRIS PUBLICATIONS

Creepy 1 is an all-new series of the classic horror anthology. Three stories by Peter David lead off the new run, '24 Hour Room Service' and 'A Creepy Homecoming' are pencilled by Kieron Dwyer and inked by Tom Sutton, while 'Bloodsuckers' by David has art by Gene Colan and Steve Leialoha. 'Turn of the Wheel' comes from the pen of Jo Duffy, with art by James Fry and Viscardi. The first of four 48 b&w page prestige format issues, Creepy ships March 3, distributed by Dark Horse.

A familiar face returns . . . Creepy 1



Bolland cover for Wonder Woman 63

DC NEWS

Brian Bolland makes his debut as cover artist for *Wonder Woman 63n* which concludes the 'Operation: Cheetah' story from *Wonder Woman Special 1*. $1.25 standard format.

Whilst *The Flash 64* and *65* continue and conclude, the bi-weekly 4-part 'Flash: Year One – Born to Run' storyline, April 21 sees The Fastest Man Alive in his own *Greatest Flash Stories Ever Told* trade paperback, reprinting the hardcover at the more affordable price of $14.95.

The New Titans 87 moves from delux format to new format. Also getting a new look is Nightwing as he dons his new costume for an action packed story featuring Deathstroke and Superman. Donna Troy also makes an announcement about her health which will change her life forever. Find out what it is on April 21.

Sandman 38 ($1.50, new format) is the first in a new series of short stories from Neil Gaiman, with pencils by newcomer Duncan Eagleson and inks by Vincent Locke, behind a fully painted cover by Dave McKean.

Animal Man 48 reaches a climax as Buddy and the Animal Masters face the Antagon and the fate of Travis Cody is revealed by Tom Veitch (writer) and Steve Dillon (artist) on April 28. $1.75, new format.

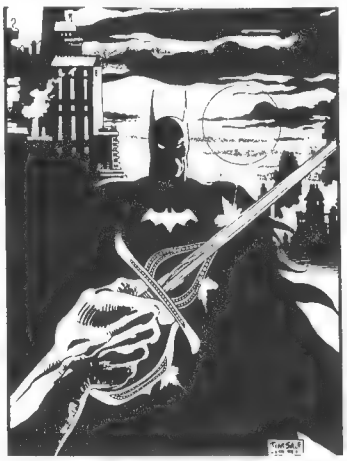
A grisly murder in deep space launches Barry Kitson in his new role as writer of *L.E.G.I.O.N. '92*. Issue 40, shipping April 28, sees him take over scripting chores from Alan Grant, as well as continuing his role as penciller of the series. $1.50, new format.

Do you seriously think that death would stop Lobo? After his terminal battle at the end of *Lobo's Back 1*, everyone's favourite bastich rampages through the afterlife until he is reincarnated as a woman! Serious new format weirdness from Keith Giffin (plot), Alan Grant (script) and Simon Bisley (art), *Lobo's Back 2* ships on April 28 at $1.50.

Doctor Fate discovers the deep secret of the Lords of Chaos and order in *Doctor Fate 41*, and in so doing seals his own. Fate that is. This final issue ships May 5. New format, $1.75.

Also coming to a close, the *Suicide Squad* end their run with issue 66. Standard format, $1.25.

A member of the Doom Patrol lies dead. Grant Morrison (writer), Richard Case and Stan Woch (art) reveal the killer's identity and it promises to be a shock. *Doom Patrol 56* (new format, $1.50) leads into next months over-sized issue and a *Doom Force* special.



Legends of the Dark Knight 32

A quick round-up of other titles shipping in April/May:

The Question Quarterly 5 (48 pages, $2.95, shipping April 14) will be the last issue, and ends with a 'mature readers' label as The Question assaults Myra. The attack is witnessed and explored in four chapters by Dennis O'Neill, Joe Quesada, Denys Cowan, Mike Baron, Shea Anton Pensa, Mike Gold, Mike Mignola, Mike Manley, and Kelley Puckett. The Question will shortly feature in a 64-page special, and a regular annual will make its debut in early 1993.

Legends of the Dark Knight 31 is a one-off tale, 'Family', in which Alfred is kidnapped by terrorist drug-smugglers in the jungle island of Corto Maltese. Writer James (*Espers, Lex Luthor, The Psycho*) Hudnall teams up with Brent (*Strikeforce: Morituri, X-Men: God Loves, Man Kills* graphic novel) Anderson to discover the Batman's reaction. Deluxe format, $1.75, shipping April 14. Only two weeks later, James (*Terminator*) Robinson begins a new 3-part story, "Blades" with art by *Challengers of the Unknown/Grendel* artist, Tim Sale, pitting Batman against the killer, Mister Lime, and Gotham's latest vigilante crime-fighter, the swashbuckling Cavalier.

Green Arrow 63 drops the 'mature readers' label for the first of a 4-part story, 'The Hunt for the Red Dragon' which sees our hero inherit his mentor's longbow – and a legacy of murder, degradation and extortion. Could the victim be Shado's grandfather? Find out on May 5.

Shado fans should watch out for the forthcoming 4-issue prestige format mini-series, *Song of the Dragon*, written by Mike Grell with art by Michael Davis Lawrence and Gray Morrow.

BATMAN STONED

Run Riddler Run **pits Batman against one of his deadliest foes. An industrialist's plans for a new, crime free Gotham, armoured ninjas, a vendetta against squatters . . . where does the Riddler fit into all this? Gerard Jones (writer) and Mark Badger (fully painted art) weave a 3-issue, 48 page prestige format riddle with issue 1 shipping May 5.**

If reading the comic isn't enough, now you can buy the statue! An 11" tall figure designed by Dick Giordano and sculpted by Randy Bowen will be released at the end of May, strictly limited to the number ordered. Each statue will be numbered, and comes fully assembled and painted, priced $119.95.

And if that doesn't satisfy your Bat-craving, June will see a new ongoing Batman title, *Shadow of the Bat*, starting with a fortnightly schedule. Alan Grant reveals more in this issues interview.

Mark Badger's highly stylized art for Batman/Riddler

BLACK CONDOR

Written by Brian Augustyn, author of the recent alternative Batman stories,* Gotham By Gaslight *and* Master of the Future, The Black Condor *is described by editor Jim Owsley as 'a guy. He flies around. Stuff happens. Exactly what 'stuff' you can find out when issue 1 ships on April 28. Until then we know that the Condor was created in an experiment. Given the power to fly, the series promises a refreshing perspective on the classic superhero. The artist is Rags Morales. Standard format.

The Black Condor – born to fly

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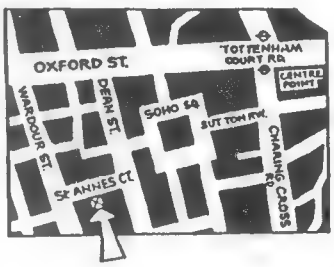

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D.C. REVEAL NEW LANTERNS FOR APRIL

DC KICK off a promotional campaign for the Green Lantern characters which will include a new on-going monthly, a new quarterly, a mini-series, and two new trade paperbacks.

As a lead-in to the changes, Green Lantern: The Road Back, a 192 page, $8.95 trade paperback ships on April 14, collecting together the first eight issues of the current Green Lantern title behind a new cover by Brian Stelfreeze and an introduction by Kevin Dooley. The story, written by Gerard Jones and drawn by Pat Broderick & Bruce Patterson, establishes the Mosaic world of Oa, and reintroduces the Guardians of the Universe.

John Stewart makes a transition to a new ongoing title, Green Lantern: Mosaic, following on from the 'Mosaic' storyline in Green Lantern 14–17. Set on the Mosaic world on Oa, where the Guardians of the Universe have set up an experimental society, Stewart is assigned to maintain order among the conflicting people brought together against their wills. Written by Gerard Jones, pencilled by Cully Hamner and inked by Dan Panosian, the monthly is standard format, priced $1.25.

April 21 sees the debut of Green Lantern Corps Quarterly, a double sized anthology, 64 pages in standard format, priced at $2.50. Green Lanterns New and old will feature stories by various creators. Issue 1 features the teams of Roger Stern & Dusty Abell in a tale which sees the return of Alan Scott; Scott Lobdell and Joe Staton send G'Nort on his first solo adventure; Gerard Jones and Tim Hamilton explore the fate of Arisia; the lead story by John Ostrander and Flint Henry introduces a new Green Lantern, as does the final tale by Doug Moench & Paul Galucy.

Green Lantern 25 ships on April 28, a 48 page special which sees the long-expected conflict between Hal and Guy explode into reality as they fight first with their rings, then hand to hand for the role of protectorate of Earth. The loser must give up his ring and leave the Green Lantern Corps. The result of the battle leads directly into a new prestige format Guy Gardner mini-series by Gerard Jones and Joe Staton.

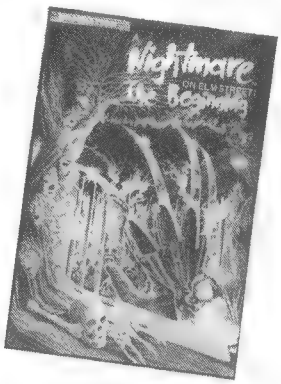
Look out also for the Green Lantern/Green Arrow Collection shipping May 5. This collects together issues 76–82 of Green Lantern published in the early 1970s which saw the two team up in a series of classic tales written by Dennis O'Neil and drawn by Neal Adams. The 176 page trade paperback is priced $12.95.

INNOVATION

A Nightmare on Elm Street: The Beginning is a four-issue mini-series exploring the origin of Freddy Krueger, as Maggie Burnham experiences hallucinatory flashbacks which lead her to discover the true story behind her father's death and rebirth.

Written by Andy Mangels and illustrated by Don and Dan Day, the $2.50 full colour deluxe format issue one should stalk into a comic-shop near you in April.

Also in time for the US release of the video, Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare is released as a trade paperback, adapted by Andy Mangels, and illustrated by Mike Witherby, Robb Phipps and Barb Kaalberg. Priced $6.95.



A Nightmare on Elm Street: The Beginning from Innovation

Dark Shadows was an American TV show that rivalled Star Trek for popularity in its heyday. The ABC-TV show premiered in 1966 and ran for 1,225 episodes until 1971. and was recently revived as an NBC mini-series. The story of Barnabus Collins, the guilt-ridden vampire star of the show, now appears as a fully-painted $2.50 comic, written by David Campiti & Scott Rockwell, and painted by E. Silas Smith. Ships in March.

CONQUEST PRESS

SF writer Richard Lupoff adapts Robert E. Howard's detective, Steve Harrison, in the first of the two-part Lord of the Dead with art by Felix Ortega. C.L. Moore's classic story, 'Shambleu', is adapted for the first of three issues starring Northwest Smith.

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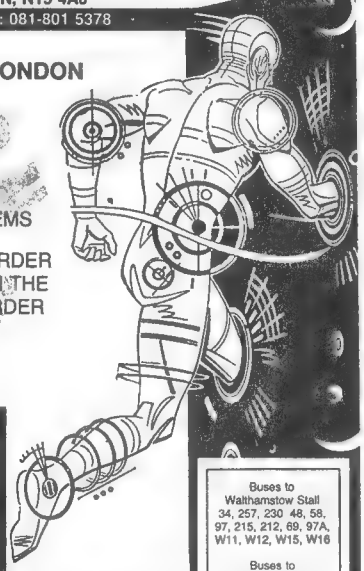

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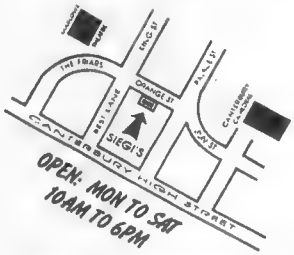

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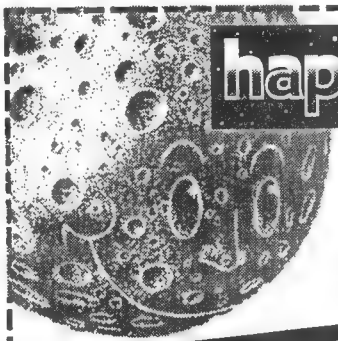

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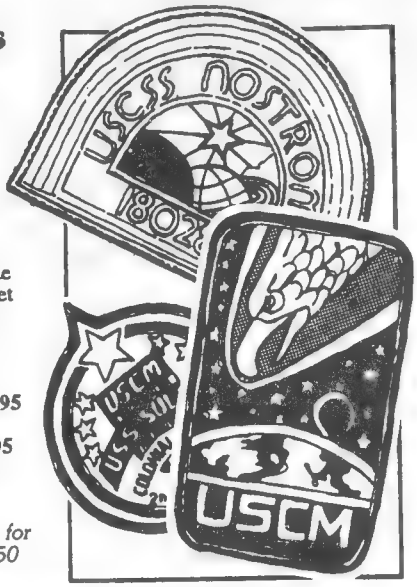

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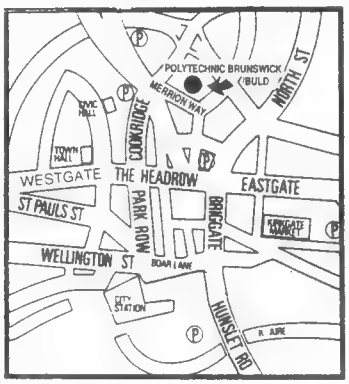

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PROFILE ON DAVID ROACH

DAVID ROACH IS A DEDICATED COLLECTOR OF COMICS AS WELL AS BEING ONE OF BRITAIN'S BRIGHTEST YOUNG TALENTS. IT WAS HIS FASCINATION FOR COMIC ART THAT INSPIRED HIM TO PRODUCE THE FANZINE, HELLFIRE, DURING THE EARLY 1980'S, WHICH LED IN TURN TO HIS FIRST PROFESSIONAL ARTWORK FOR 2000AD. A METICULOUS WORKER, HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SAGA OF THE EVER-POPULAR ANDERSON PSI DIVISION STRIP HAS ATTRACTED APPROVAL FROM FANS AND PROFESSIONALS ALIKE

David Roach has a consuming passion for comics: he can identify the work of almost any artist instantly, the more obscure the better.

He speaks with the knowledge of having studied and thought about the subject, and not the simple fact-parroting of someone out to impress. In conversation he speaks critically of some artists, but saves much of the criticism for his own work: with only four years as a professional he feels he still has a lot to learn. However, the quality of his latest work in *2000AD* – the highly popular conclusion to the 'Engram' series featuring Judge Anderson – is undeniable.

His work has been influenced by diverse talents: the American superhero artists of the early 70s; the Warren school of European and South American artists', classical art and the underground. The resulting amalgam has developed into a photo-realist style: Anderson Psi Division's often grim storylines are the perfect vehicle for his work, benefiting from David's attention to figurework and careful use of shading and cross-hatching. His work to date has been best shown in the traditional black and white of British adventure comics.

David's first professional appearance was in the pages of Britain's *2000AD* while he was still in his early twenties, although in conversation he plays down any ideas that he was some child prodigy of comic strips.

"I'd already been drawing comic characters for a while when I entered high school," he recalls. "They were mostly copied, mind you, but I thought I was pretty hot stuff! So I thought I'd bring them in to show my art teacher, you know, to get a bit of praise. She took a glance at a few pictures and said, 'O.K. I can see you can draw these things, let's see if you can do some proper art', and that was the last time I took in any comic-style drawings. In fact I didn't draw any strips at all until after I left school. In retrospect it was a good move because it forced me to draw from life and to look at things other than comic book characters.

"After school I got into Art college – I did a sort of Fine Arts course in Cardiff which was a combination of art, philosophy, sociology and aesthetics – pretty highbrow stuff! I guess I took it as much for reasons of intellectual gratification as anything else. The theory was it would expose me to all sorts of disciplines – and in fact I did nothing much for the first year except generally broaden my mind. But even before I started the course I knew I only wanted to draw comics. I wasn't exactly their best student.

"It was much the same pattern as in high school – for the first few years my reports were great but I just got progressively bored and did less and less work. Art and English were the exception, although even there I didn't exactly over-exert myself. By the sixth form I had given up doing homework and if the lessons looked dull I might not turn up at all.

"I spent a lot of my time in the library reading about the Vienna Secessionists (Klimt, Moser, Kokoschka) and the Renaissance, which still seems like a more worthwhile education. I don't mean to suggest that I was a rebel, good God! I was probably the least rebellious pupil the school ever had, but I was easily bored and if I could possibly avoid doing work I did.

In the early 1970's British comics were going through a bad patch after a period of highly creative and imaginative publishing. The traditional adventure weeklies were stagnating, and towards the late sixties the best British comics were those chronicling TV series' in strip form.

"... NOW LET'S SEE IF YOU CAN DO SOME PROPER ART"

However, even the most traditional comics could still have a profound influence on their young readers:

"The first comic I ever bought for myself, rather than it being a parental choice, was the *Wizard*. However, a story about giant spiders so terrified me I had to stop reading it!

"After that I came upon *TV Action*, a comic that simply amazed me. I'd never seen such explosive, exciting artwork – we're talking about people like Gerry Haylock, John Burns, Jose Ortiz and Frank Bellamy here – and the fact that the strips all featured TV characters like Dr. Who and U.F.O. only added to the appeal. I followed it avidly and was immensely upset when it folded, so I was actively looking for something equally thrilling when I came across Marvel Comics. I guess this would be late 1973. My fate was sealed.

Purity – the bride of Nemesis – from 2000AD Prog. 558 (1988).

Psi-chotic nightmares from 'Engram', Prog. 758 (1991).

"Of course, my parents disapproved (I think it was a particularly gory Conan that did it), and threw them out. But bit by bit they became resigned to the fact I was going to keep on buying them whether they liked it or not. My favourite title was definitely *Killraven* – I can remember poring over it for hours trying to figure out what it was about. The fact I found it almost imcomprehensible made it seem all the more exciting.

"By and large British comics, and to a certain extent British culture at the time, seemed somewhat drab and uninteresting compared to the brash, colourful and exotic American comics. It was a way of tapping into a completely different world. My passion for Marvel Comics and later D.C. (though back then, D.C. Comics were definitely 2nd division in our eyes) became all consuming and I avidly collected the likes of *Deathlok, Black Panther, The Avengers, Captain America,* and anything else I could get my hands on. My brother also got interested in comics and through him I'd read *Man Thing, Defenders* and *Howard the Duck* – rather more challenging comics than most others around then.

MARVEL

"Perhaps most importantly Marvel Comics inspired me to draw. I can still clearly remember copying a George Tuska Iron Man and coming out with something that was recognisably a person even if it was pretty crude.

"Back then my heroes were Jack Kirby, Gil Kane, Barry Smith, Neal Adams, Mike Ploog, John Buscema, Craig Russell and Alfredo Alcala. I'd seen Alcala on *Planet of the Apes* – which was the only Marvel U.K. title my local newsagent deemed respectable enough to carry!

'The Filipino artists Marvel used on the Apes comics, and their black and white line in general, which were coming over to Britain in some numbers back then – '75 to '76 – impressed me tremendously. Titles like *Unknown Worlds of Science Fiction, Savage Tales, Tales of the Zombie* and *Deadly Hands of Kung Fu* were drawn almost exclusively by the likes of Alcala, Tony Dezuniga, Steve Gan, Alex Nino and Rudy Nebres and suggested there was more to comics than just the hyper-kinetic art of Jack Kirby or Gil Kane.

"Don't get me wrong though, for much of my teens I was a fanatical Marvel fan and I still enjoy that stuff today, but I could never restrict my interests to just one thing.

"I was always looking at new things and I guess I was about 13 or 14 when I got into Warren Comics. *Creepy 92* was the first issue I saw, in Forever People in Bristol – at that time the closest comic shop to Cardiff – and I could hardly resist it. It featured Adams, Berni Wrightson, Russ Heath (who I was beginning to appreciate in D.C.'s *Our Army At War*), Alex Toth, Wally Wood, and it had a Frank Frazetta cover.

"... FOR MUCH OF MY TEENS I WAS A FANATICAL MARVEL FAN AND I STILL ENJOY THAT STUFF TODAY"

"The Adams story, 'Thrill-Kill', about a roof-top sniper, was pretty strong stuff and seemed light years away from Marvel and D.C.'s superheroes.

"As I began to buy more and more Warren magazines I became influenced by the Spanish artists they used, particularly Vampirella's artist Jose Gonzalez. I never gave up superhero comics – I was a fan of the X-Men, as everyone was back then – but I largely stopped drawing them. Instead I tried to match the florid, rococo designs of Esteban Maroto or Ramon Torrents, and the realism of Luis Garcia, Fernando Fernandez and Jose Ortiz. I still look at these artists today – 'Engram' was greatly influenced by Luis Garcia and Jose Gonzalez. I'm not saying I'm anything like as good, mind you, but I am trying.

"I was very lucky: at an age when most people give up comics, I was discovering the Warren magazines, then *Heavy Metal*, then 'ground level' comics like *Star Reach* and *Hot Stuff*, then underground comics, so I never discarded comics as being childish – I simply moved onto something more stimulating."

By the early 70's British comic fandom was supported by a thriving selection of fan-published magazines, carrying news and features. Such fanzines were the training ground for some of Britain's most talented artists, Dave Gibbons and Brian Bolland to name just two. To anyone interested in comics beyond simple escapism, fanzines offered more than a market place to buy and sell comics. "I've always been very inquisitive about comics," David recalls. "Each time I read a new area of interest I have to explore it further, and fanzines were a way of finding out what was out there.

"Ironically the first fanzine I bought was *Comic*

The dead give up their secrets. From 'Helios', Prog. 617 (1989).

Would you buy chicken nuggets from this man? A scene from a forthcoming Anderson story.

Media News – edited by Richard Burton who I now find myself working for at *2000AD*. Back in the late 70's/early 80's creating your own fanzines was very much the thing to do. Actually *Hellfire* wasn't my idea: a friend suggested it, but I jumped at the chance to co-edit and after getting an Alan Moore/Garry Leach interview at a local con – quite a coup – we felt compelled to put it out. A year late, *Hellfire #1*, appeared, produced by Ian Jenkins, myself, my brother Paul, and a friend, Andrew Jones. For reasons of sheer ego I drew an eight page strip for it – In fact it was the strip that Steve McManus saw in *Hellfire #4* which helped me get a job at *2000AD*.

"I don't know whether people find comics less inspiring these days, but there does seem to be a dearth of fanzines and thus fewer outlets for fans. I guess David Lloyd's Cartoon Centre redresses the balance somewhat, but that can only help nurture a few people at a time.

"People seem to go straight into professional magazines these days, but then I came in too early myself – I think my early work seems incredibly crude. I got by primarily on a flashy inking style and it took quite a while for me to get to anything like an acceptable level of drawing ability, and I'm still learning now.

"Of course, I didn't think this at the time – you never do – but I had a lot to learn to become even a competent artist. I was driven by my influences – the artists I've already mentioned and more recent discoveries like Moebius (well, I discovered him when I was 14, so he's hardly recent), Paul Gillon, Manara, Alberto Breccia, Al Williamson, Angelo Torres, Stan Drake, et al – I could always compare my work with these and see what I could be achieving.

"Perhaps more than a lack of experience, I sense a lack of history in many new artists. Traditionally comic artists have learned from the old masters – Foster, Raymond, Caniff, Eisner – and so have had a good grounding in anatomy, storytelling and so on. But if all you've seen are modern artists, the temptation is to pick up on the flashy veneer – the rendering, painting, almost caricatured figures, and miss out on the fundamental drawing skill that should underpin all that. I think we're beginning to see examples of this already, and the years ahead are going to see a whole host of Bisley and Sienkiewicz clones with none of the original artist's drawing skills."

It seems that British comics over the past two years have become obsessed with fully-painted colour. Is the age-old tradition for black and white work becoming a lost art?

"Well, I think we're beginning to see signs of this, but of course all my carping on about it could be construed as sour grapes. I strongly feel that colour should be used to enhance the drawings, not compensate for them. If you look at the work of Sienkiewicz, Liberatore or Moebius for instance, their work holds up just as well in black and white."

ANDERSON

Certainly the majority of David's work has appeared in black and white, and most of it in Britain's premier weekly, *2000AD*. "Pretty much my whole career so far has been in *2000AD*, firstly with Nemesis and then Anderson – 27 or 28.episodes so far, I think.

"Most of my non-Anderson work has been with Mike Collins who lives only 15 minutes walk from me. So far I've inked one of his Future Shocks, done some pencilling and inking on the Judge Dredd 'Fairly Hyper-Man' story, inked a *Galaxy Rangers* episode for Marvel UK and done the odd week's pencilling here and there on the Dredd newspaper strip – pretty much without credit, although that's not Mike's fault.

"Mike's pencils are a beauty to behold – they just cry out to be inked so it's always a pleasure to work with him though I'm not convinced I've ever really done him justice. Our styles are miles apart it seems, but he has a really solid story-telling ability that I hope rubs off on me every time we collaborate.

"It's pretty straight-forward. I do A4 roughs of each page, then do rough panel layouts onto the actual page, which are then tightened up and inked. At the moment I'm using primarily a rotring and brushwork to ink but most of my early work was entirely brushwork. Of course, once all the pages are roughly pencilled I can draw any of the pencils I want to, so I tend to pencil and ink my favourite panels first – I've never drawn a strip in the correct order. Some of the time I simply can't wait to pencil a particularly exciting panel.

"Alan Grant's scripts are, of course, an absolute joy to work on – and he's not paying me to say this. He knows exactly what I like to draw and puts some marvellous imagery in – I mean, just look at "Engram". You've got Judge Death in a carriage made of bones, you've got 'cosmic mind trips', eerie graveyard scenes – perfect! I couldn't ask for more. And his scripts really work – the panel to panel continuity is all there – it's always totally correct. All I've got to do is draw it as he describes and we've got a proper functioning story, which isn't always the case with scripts. There's really no-one else out there I'd rather work with."

> **"PERHAPS MORE THAN A LACK OF EXPERIENCE I SENSE A LACK OF HISTORY IN MANY NEW ARTISTS**

With such exciting scripts, and a character he clearly enjoys so much it may be difficult to understand why we see so little of his work. David is, to put it bluntly, painfully slow! "That's understating it," he laughs.

"It's not so much that I'm slow, but I am something of a perfectionist – not that it always shows mind you. I'm pretty quick with layouts and I can often ink a page in one-and-a-half to two days; It's really the pencilling that takes all the time. My layouts are quite loose, but a lot of the drawing is already there, particularly the figure work, but when it comes to tightening up I like to work with a certain amount of reference, mainly for faces, and that slows me right down. For all that, though, I have been known to do an episode in three weeks – not exactly quick I'll admit, but amazing for me!

AMERICA

The publication of the 'Engram' storyline in 1991 has gained David a whole new possé of fans, yet still all readers of *2000AD*. However, it seems the future will see more work outside those thrill-powered pages.

"'Engram' has really opened a lot of things up for me, particularly in America. I've already done a Wild Cards strip for Dave Ellitt's *Epic* comic that Marvel are bringing out and it looks like I might be doing more – Lewis Shiner seems keen for us to collaborate in the future.

"I've got a script for *Taboo* that I'll be drawing soon and that bodes well for the future. I've always been an underground fan and *Taboo* is, to my mind at least, carrying on the tradition of the great underground horror books like *Slow Death* and *Skull*.

"It's funny, I interviewed Steve Bissette years ago for *Hellfire* and now we're working together professionally. The same thing happened in late 1990

with David Lloyd. I interviewed David in *Hellfire 3* and we'd kept in touch over the years. In fact he gave me a lot of help in learning the basics of drawing strips, sending me layouts in the post, that sort of thing, and out of the blue he rang, asking if I was interested in collaborating on a project for Thames TV. It was a four page adaptation of a few pages of *Fahrenheit 451* which he laid out, I drew, and my girlfriend, Jacqueline, coloured. We were all really pleased with how it came out, but Thames hadn't bothered to ask permission to run it, and at the last minute it had to be pulled from the programme (a school programme, I think) on orders from lawyers.

"THERE'S SO MUCH GOOD STUFF ABOUT AT THE MOMENT . . ."

"We all got paid, but that wasn't really the point. I know David still harbours hope of using it some day – it would be a shame to let it go to waste – so maybe it'll see print eventually.

"There is talk of Alan Grant and I putting something together for Tundra, a graphic novel of some sort. If that comes off it'll take care of me for the next year at least. I'd like to do more stuff, particularly writing, for *Taboo* in the future – I'd love to do a short piece on the victorian artist Richard Dadd, sort of like Robert Crumb's Philip K. Dick and Charlie Patton strips, but we'll have to wait and see. It would be nice to combine commercial work with more eosteric material, possibly for *Taboo* but who knows?

"D.C. and Dark Horse have expressed interest in me and there's always Judge Anderson which I do enjoy drawing – if only the pay was better! At the moment I'm doing an Alien illustration for an ad agency which is amazing financially and fun to do – this stems again from 'Engram' – which just goes to show that you never know what's suddenly going to appear. That was right out of the blue."

With so much work on the cards, and that notoriously precise style demanding so much of his attention, has he time left for reading comics? What does the discerning fan turned artist read these days?

"There's so much good stuff out at the moment. I really enjoy David Clowes' *Eightball, Yummy Fur, Hate,* anything by Robert Crumb, *Love and Rockets, Snorf, Drawn and Quarterly, Chevel Noir,* Corban's comics . . . oh yes, Dave McKean's *Cages* – really nice stuff. Of the mainstream stuff, Lee Weeks is doing some nice work on *Daredevil* and I'm really enjoying Denys Cowan's *Deathlok* – how could I not? I loved the comic when it first came out. And I'll always buy anything by Neal Adams (Yes! I'm the one that buys Continuity Comics!), Russ Heath, George Perez, or Jerry Ordway.

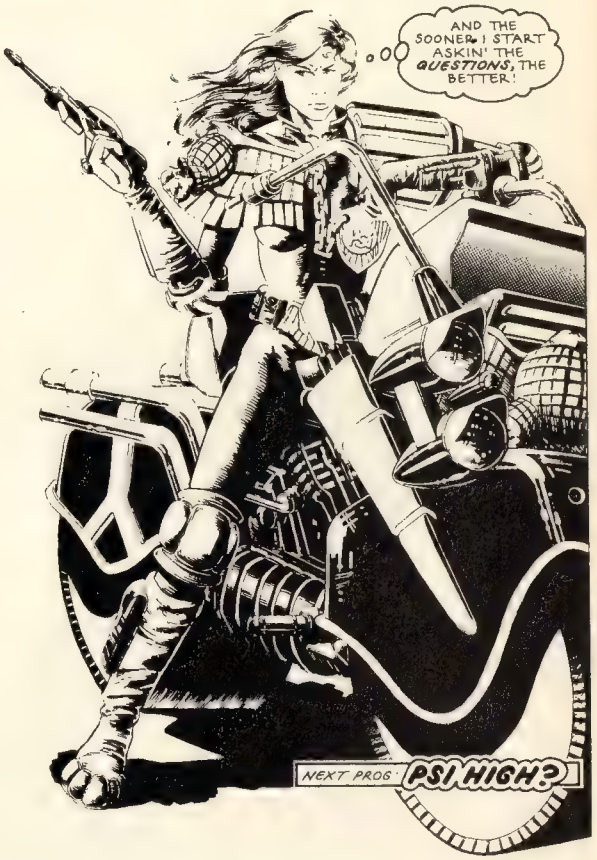
"However, I'm somewhat ambivalent about the whole notion of 'star artists'. I've always wanted to get a certain amount of recognition – there's nothing worse than working on a strip for weeks and then having it ignored. What's the point of that? You want some reaction, but it should be for the right reasons.

"The American public in particular seems to reward the crassest, most primitive work over the truly inspirational. I mean, Jim Lee is O.K., if somewhat derivative of Michael Golden and others, but the popularity of Rob Liefeld and Todd McFarlane simply baffles me. Artists like Garcia Lopez and Jerry Ordway never seem to get any recognition at all, let alone the old masters like Kane, Buscema, Kirby, Infantino, Kubert, et al.

"American fans seem to be woefully ignorant of their heritage, they reward the most homogeneous, most shallow artists over the truly creative. Things are a little better here, but again I don't sense the same desire to learn about the past that we all had in the 70's and early 80's.

"As far as personal recognition goes, well, I'm still learning. I do get a buzz out of people liking my work though, who wouldn't? Much of the time I've simply sent episodes off and not heard a word about them at all, so I think I've learned to set my own standards and tried to reach them, rather than trying to satisfy some amorphous audience out there, whoever they may be.

"I could probably rip off Simon Bisley and become an overnight success, but what's the point of that? I wouldn't be satisfying myself and people would get bored of it pretty quickly. Simon's style works for himself, superbly, but only because he has the skill to bring it off. It's an expression of who he is, it doesn't work for anyone else. Frankly I'm still striving towards competence!" ■



THE DAVID ROACH FILE

H.M.S. Conqueror: The Naming [inks], Conqueror Special 1, Dec 1985
Nemesis Book 8: Purity's Story, 2000AD 558–566, 23 Jan 1988–19 Mar 1988
Judge Anderson: Helios, 2000AD 614–622, 18 Feb 1989–15 Apr 1989
Judge Anderson: The Prophet, 2000AD 645–647, 23 Sep 1989–7 Oct 1989
Judge Anderson: The Screaming Skull, 2000AD 669–670, 10 Mar 1990–17 Mar 1990
Judge Dredd: Alley of the Ultra-Vixens, Judge Dredd Mega-Special 3, May 1990
Judge Anderson: Engram, 2000AD 712–717, 5 Jan 1991–9 Feb 1991
Judge Anderson: Engram (part 2), 2000AD 758–763, 23 Nov 1991–28 Dec 1991

TUNDRA

COMIC COLLECTOR VISITS BRITAIN'S NEWEST PUBLISHERS TO SEE WHAT THEY HAVE IN STORE FOR 1992

After the human crush of midday London and the death-rattle of the Northern Line, entering Tundra's office was, thankfully, like entering a different world.

Managing Editor Steve White is hunched over his desk, digging through references whilst listening to a tape which he identifies as the soundtrack to Dances With Wolves. He's on his own, dwarfed in the spacious office.

Tundra Publishing UK have just arrived and the music may echo now, but, as Stuart Green explains when he arrives, they are only just moving in; the difficult task of setting up a new company has already begun, and to prove his point, a stream of phonecalls interrupts our discussion. We escape to a small restaurant with a few early diners and too-loud tannoy music.

Stuart Green served his apprenticeship in comics journalism as the editor of *Speakeasy*, moving with that magazine to John Brown Publishing and the experimental *Blast!*. The magazine folded at issue 7 on a note of regret, caught up in the domino-collapse of Britain's young adult comics. *Blast!*'s mixture of cyber-age experiment from British creators and a thoughtful selection of reprint material ranging from 'Concrete' to 'Torpedo' was, it would seem, too eclectic for public taste, another nail in the coffin for monthly anthologies.

"Jesus Christ!" No, not quite – Lazarus Churchyard from Ellis & D'Israeli's Goodnight Ladies.

. . . THE EVENTUAL LINE-UP COULD EASILY READ LIKE A WHO'S WHO OF BRITISH CREATORS . . .

"When Dave Elliott and I joined, we were given the impression that John Brown Publishing was seriously thinking of expanding into the comic market," Stuart explains. "He seemed to have thought long and hard about it, and seemed aware of how much money he had to invest and how long it would take to establish a market for British comics. Unfortunately that wasn't the case, and he packed it in at the first hurdle. It was a blow as issue 7 saw a completely new line-up and just wasn't given a chance. There's a fantastic amount of material being produced in this country, or could be produced with the right set-up."

THE RIGHT STUFF

The right set-up arrived in the shape of Kevin Eastman and the still youthful Tundra Publishing. Eastman's *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* had taken the comic world by storm in the mid-eighties, sparking off a parady-industry and the American black and white tidal wave. The Turtles survived the glut of titles, and successfully transferred to the silver screen and the world of merchandising, where Eastman and co-creator Peter Laird were made aware of the benefits of retaining control over their creations. Tundra has it's financial feet firmly planted on the backs of four turtles.

"One of the motivations behind Tundra was to set up a company whereby the creators can enjoy the same control of copyright and characters that Kevin enjoyed. He's set up a situation where the characters can be exploited, but always with the participation of the creators. For instance, Limelight – the film production company co-owned by Kevin – is currently working on a Mr. Monster cartoon for the Saturday Morning TV market in the States, and several other characters.

"One of the reasons I like working with Dave and Kevin is that creator's rights are very strong within the company, but it isn't the only motivation. Everybody just wants to produce good comics.

"Tundra in the UK I put down to Dave Elliott's frustration with what happened at John Brown. Dave showed Kevin lots of ideas and away we went. Coming out of this side of the Tundra operation will be a lot of new faces, a few ideas that creators have kept behind that they didn't want to give to anybody else, and quite a lot of things that publishers over here haven't had the guts to publish or have decided there isn't a market for. All the material that was commissioned for *Blast!* is coming out from Tundra."

The Tundra UK line-up is still in the planning stages, but the eventual line-up could easily read like a Who's Who of British creators. "It would be easier to say who's *not* working with us," says Stuart.

analysis of west-coast new-age fads in the cyberpunk world of Lazarus Churchyard."

One of the writers to debut in *Blast!* was Gordon Rennie who had two stories in the last issue: 'White Trash' and a Conan Doyle pastiche, 'The Curious Case of the Vanishing Villain'. This pitched Sherlock Holmes against Robert Louis Stevenson's Mr. Hyde in a multi-level fictional London.

The two stories proved to be the swan song of the magazine and Stuart has nothing but praise for his protege: "I'll go on record as saying Gordon is a fantastic writer, the most exciting writer I worked with on *Blast!*. He used to write articles for *Speakeasy* and I always enjoyed his off-the-cuff cynicism but I was staggered when the first thing he sent me was the Sherlock Holmes story – definitely the most original thing I read in all the time I was editing *Blast!* He's a young writer, a fantastic dialogue writer with a very original mind.

"White Trash is now going to be expanded into a three issue mini-series for Tundra, with sequels planned as well. We're particularly excited about that book and the Sherlock Holmes.

"We're going to be doing *Special Agent Orson Wells* by Gordon and Woodrow Phoenix, which is just a fantastic premise. Everybody at the company is excited about this story. Welles had a habit of disappearing off the set of Citizen Kane. When he was doing Kane he was also producing radio shows and writing for Broadway, and he would suddenly go on a bender for a week. No-one would know where he was or what he'd done; probably he was holed up in some bar, but Gordon speculates that on one of these brief sojourns the FDR calls Welles up to the White House and sends him behind enemy lines to sabotage the Nazis as they push through Europe. Loella

THE NEW STUFF

"We've got three Lazarus Churchyard books planned. The first one will collect together 'The Virtual Kiss', the story that we ran in *Blast!*, then there'll be a book called *Goodnight Ladies* which collects together three short stories. And then there's going to be a 32 page one-shot, *Furyeyes* which is Warren's

A boy, a bike, and love in a chip shop. Ed Hillyer's Skidmarks 3-issue mini starts in June.

Who will save Hollywood from the Nazi's? Special Agent Orson Welles by Gordon Rennie & Woodrow Phoenix.

Glen Dakin & Phil Elliot's eco-friendly superhero saga Greenhouse Warriors, an on-going bimonthly from June.

SKIN

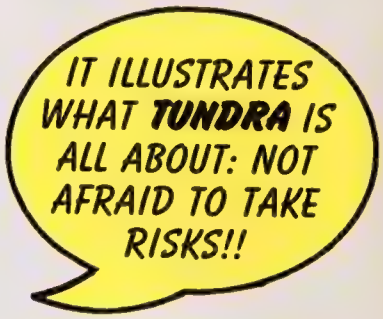
The big news is that Tundra are planning to publish 'Skin', the already controversial thalidomide skinhead strip by Pete Milligan and Brendan McCarthy. "It's going to come out as a one-shot, probably in June. I don't think anybody at *Crisis* would resent me saying this, but 'Skin' would have been a turning point for British comics. I think anybody whose read it would tell you it's one of the best stories ever produced."

One day someone will invent new words to help us describe Brendan's work. We revert to gestures, using our hands like animated Frenchmen in a street restaurant to describe the flowing structure of his pages. "There's a lot of Eisner in Brendan which a lot of people don't spot. Rather than use strict panel borders he uses open-frame, which flow into each other. Skin is being coloured by Carol Swain who's one of the brighter stars of the British small press scene. It's really, really good."

The story of Skin dates back to 1989, the problems revolving around the supposed obscenity of the strip: the story was announced by *Crisis*, but was refused by the film-makers who prepare the artwork for printing. A quick check with Fleetway's lawyers meant it was swiftly axed, deemed to be potentially depraving and corrupting by the watchdogs. The story was dropped, leaving the credibility of *Crisis* in tatters, the editors finding themselves in the embarrassing position of having to follow orders from above despite their own conclusion that it was an important work of comic strip fiction and far from obscene. In 1990 it was announced that *Deadline* would publish the strip, but nothing else was heard. Now, at long last, the readers will get the chance to judge for themselves.

"It's a great story, nothing libellous, nothing obscene about it at all. The thalidamide guy isn't somebody you'd like to take home to meet your middle-class parents, but there are people out there like that.

"It illustrates more than anything else what Tundra is all about; not afraid to take risks.



"One impression that a lot of people gained with the initial books that came out was Tundra is a place for people to indulge themselves, publishing books that no-one else would publish, but this is incorrect. Tundra is as much into entertaining people as educating them. There will be a lot of exciting, fast, funny comics that you might not have expected from us. We're going to be doing the new *Bogie Man* book by the end of the year. That's one of the best products of British comics."

If indulgence is a possible criticism, at least no-one can accuse Tundra of being blinkered in their choice of products. Their first two years have seen the publications of such diverse titles as Alan Moore's *From Hell* and Mark Martin's *20 Nude Dancers 20* collections. The Sketchbook series was launched with Eastman's own *Melting Pot* in 1990, and has included such talents as John Totleben, Michael Zulli, Kent Williams, Rick Bryant, Charles Vess, Jon J. Muth, Paul Mavrides and Michael Dooney. Dave McKean's eccentric, mystifying, beautifully delineated *Cages* stands out as one of the best books in the comic book market place today.

Parsons is revealed as a Nazi master-spy.

"It's an excellent story. Woodrow is using a very cinematic art style. That's going to be a one-shot, although we're hoping to talk Gordon into doing a *Young Orson Welles*.

"Ian Edgington, who did the Terminator mini-series for Dark Horse (*The Enemy Within*), has got two series planned, one with D'Israeli. Alan Grant, Simon Bisley and Tony Luke are doing *The Dominator*. I don't know if Tony would want to be reminded, but I first came across him when I worked behind the till at Forbidden Planet and he and a mate came in dressed as Nemesis for the photo-story in *2000AD*. His style is a lot more sophisticated now."

Burglar Bill by Paul Grist. "What you'd get if you crossed Billy the Cat with The Smiths."

"We're going to be doing a series of European albums, the first of which is *Margot in Badtown* by Jerome Charyn and Massimiliano Frezzato. *The Adventures of Latex* is organised by the Foundation du Present in France. It's basically aimed at raising money for AIDS research with stories by Moebius, Joost Swarz, Prado, Hunt Emerson, Gilbert Sheldon, all taking the condom as a theme to promote the idea of safe sex. It will appear in the UK as *Adventures in Rubber*.

"It's done with a lot of humour, a lot of taste – there are a few serious pieces in there. That'll be coming out at the end of May or beginning of June. The royalties on the book will all go to AIDS research. You'll hear a lot more about it nearer the time.

"There's a possibility that Tundra US will be doing news-stand projects. It's still early days for Tundra UK but it is likely that I'll be doing a weekly football comic from the start of next season. Most of the stuff planned is one-shots or mini-series' that can be collected together as graphic novels. On the whole, we'll probaby concentrate on the direct sales market for the first year with the eventual aim of cracking the bookstore market. The adult comic market over here has proved very difficult to crack, despite any criticisms you can make of editorial policy on *Crisis*, *Revolver* and *Blast!*"

But what about the traditional fare of comics, the superhero? "Quite a lot of people were convinced it wouldn't be possible to produce a good superhero comic. Tundra are publishing *Madman* by Michael Dalton Allred. He's a kind of superhero, he's got a yo-yo for a weapon and he's a little bit self-deluded as you can probaby guess from the title. We also have people like Simon Bisley and Dave Elliott collaborating on a project. I think they call the guy Max Carnage. Anything drawn by Simon Bisley with a title like that is going to have a high body-count. No area's out of bounds at Tundra." ■

Dougie and Ivan return in "Dicks", private-eye capers from the heroes of Troubled Souls and For A Few Troubles More.

Robin Smith reworks 'The China Syndrome' for a 4-issue series starting June. Written by Wagner & Grant.

FUTURE PROJECTS

"There's a lot of stuff coming out both sides of the Atlantic that has previously be seen through small independent publishers who couldn't afford to finish them off. *The Crow* by James O'Barr which was quite a cult hit – very much a Goth hero in the mould of Sandman. It's a revenge tale, he's after the killers of his girlfriend. It's dirty and gritty and, as everybody knows, I like that kind of stuff.

"Titan declined to bring *Taboo 5* into this country. There's some quite graphic sex in it so we're going to import that directly and then hand it to Titan if we can get it past customs. Hopefully we'll try to do something about the way comics are viewed in this country, the whole idea of adult comics, building on what Fleetway established with the young adult line.

"I think the first issue was a little more conventional than you would have expected, but I think that Steve Bisette and the creators have actually thought about what the word 'taboo' can mean, and have started to get into some really interesting areas. All the hype that's been talked about adult comics and comics for mature readers, I think that *Taboo*'s one of the few anthologies that can really offer a lot to readers.

"The majority of Tundra US books will receive European translation. Alan Moore's had no problem with selling his material abroad. Similarly I believe *Cages* is going to be translated. Dave (Elliott) and Helen (Carter) went over to France and interest was shown in almost everything, which is very encouraging.

The HAPPY WARRIOR

NORMAN WRIGHT PROVIDES A COLLECTORS GUIDE TO THE WORK OF BRITISH ARTIST, FRANK BELLAMY

At its best Frank Bellamy's work has a dynamic vitality and aggressive sense of movement that has rarely been equalled and never surpassed. More than any other artist he brought a new sense of excitement to the adventure strip of the 1950s and '60s and dominated the field with series after series of masterly drawn strips. others tried unsuccessfully to emulate his style and almost every adventure strip since has owed something to his influence.

Frank Bellamy was born in Kettering in 1917. His early artistic influences were the juvenile comics of his childhood, and it was not until he came across some old American Sunday comic sections that he really began to take an interest in adventure strips. He found the Tarzan strips of Hal Foster and Byrne Hogarth more to his taste than the rather static picture stories featured in British comics of the 1920s and '30s. An added bonus, as far as the young Bellamy was concerned, was the jungle setting, for he had long been fascinated by big cats and other creatures of the African plains.

After leaving school he worked in a local studio, but it was not long before his call-up papers arrived and the army put his artistic talents to good use drawing detailed diagrams of machine gun mechanisms and aircraft recognition charts. He volunteered for service in Africa but was turned down on the grounds he was of far more use churning out charts than he would be fighting Rommel!

When he was demobbed he moved to London, determined to work his way round every studio until he found himself employment. His portfolio came to rest first at the Norfolk Studios and he was offered a job on the spot.

His early work consisted mainly of spot illustrations for such magazines as *Everybody's Weekly, Outspan Magazine* and *Boys Own Paper*. His first strip was a short series of single bank advertisements for Gibbs toothpaste, featuring a super hero type of character named Commando Gibbs in his battles against Dragon Decay. They appeared during 1952 in *Eagle* and were inauspicious affairs that gave little indication of the superlative work Frank Bellamy would eventually produce for the comic.

Bellamy's big break came when he was offered the opportunity to work on *Mickey Mouse Weekly*, the prestigious photogravure comic published by Odhams. He left Norfolk Studios and went freelance.

His main contribution to the comic was 'Monty Carstairs', an upper-crust adventurer whose exploits had been appearing in the comic since February 1951. Carstairs was something of a cross between Peter Whimsy and Paul Temple – always immaculately dressed, invariaby cool headed and with plenty of money for fast cars and the other accoutrements that were the lot of the well heeled investigator.

Bellamy's first work on the strip appeared in the issue dated July 25 1953, when Monty was engaged on an adventure entitled 'The Secret of the Sands'. This was followed by three further serial adventures.

'Monty Carstairs' was an action packed strip, and from the moment he took it over Bellamy began to show his propensity for depicting movement. During his year on the strip he started to develop all of the techniques that later became hallmarks of his work.

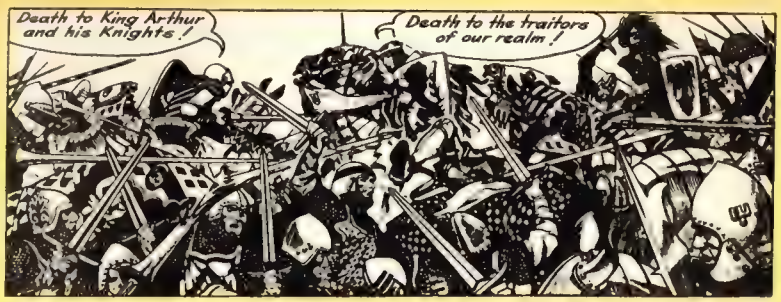
While working on *Mickey Mouse Weekly* he drew his first colour strips: segments of the 'Walt Disney's Living Desert' feature. He was able to sign his Monty Carstairs strips with his own name but all of the comic's Disney-related strips had to be signed 'Walt Disney'.

1954 was a landmark year for Bellamy, marking the beginning of his long association with Hulton Press. His first work for the publisher was a picture story adaptation of 'The Swiss Family Robinson' for *Swift*, a stable-mate of *Eagle* aimed at a slightly younger age group. This was followed by 'King Arthur and His Knights', a strip that gave the artist his first opportunity to show his full potential.

Week after week he brought the strip to life with a succession of powerful images that thrilled and delighted readers. He captured to perfection all of the splendour and pageantry of the Arthurian legend, yet throughout there was the brooding fatalism of Mallory's classic tale. The scenes of the final confrontation between the forces of Arthur and Mordred teemed with armour clad warriors engaged in pitched battles. Panoramic frames were crammed with sword and lance-wielding knights, while the air bristled with arrows. Arthur's death and the return of Excalibur to the Lady of the Lake was beautifully handled and a very moving episode.

by. Robin Hood's outlaws suffered much Slowly they obtained clothing, weapons ithout which they could not have lived at all. They found a peaceful glade and there they made their home. They built huts of timber and dug caverns beneath the earth in which to store provisions.

Two examples of Bellamy's work for Swift – King Arthur and Robin Hood, both from 1956.

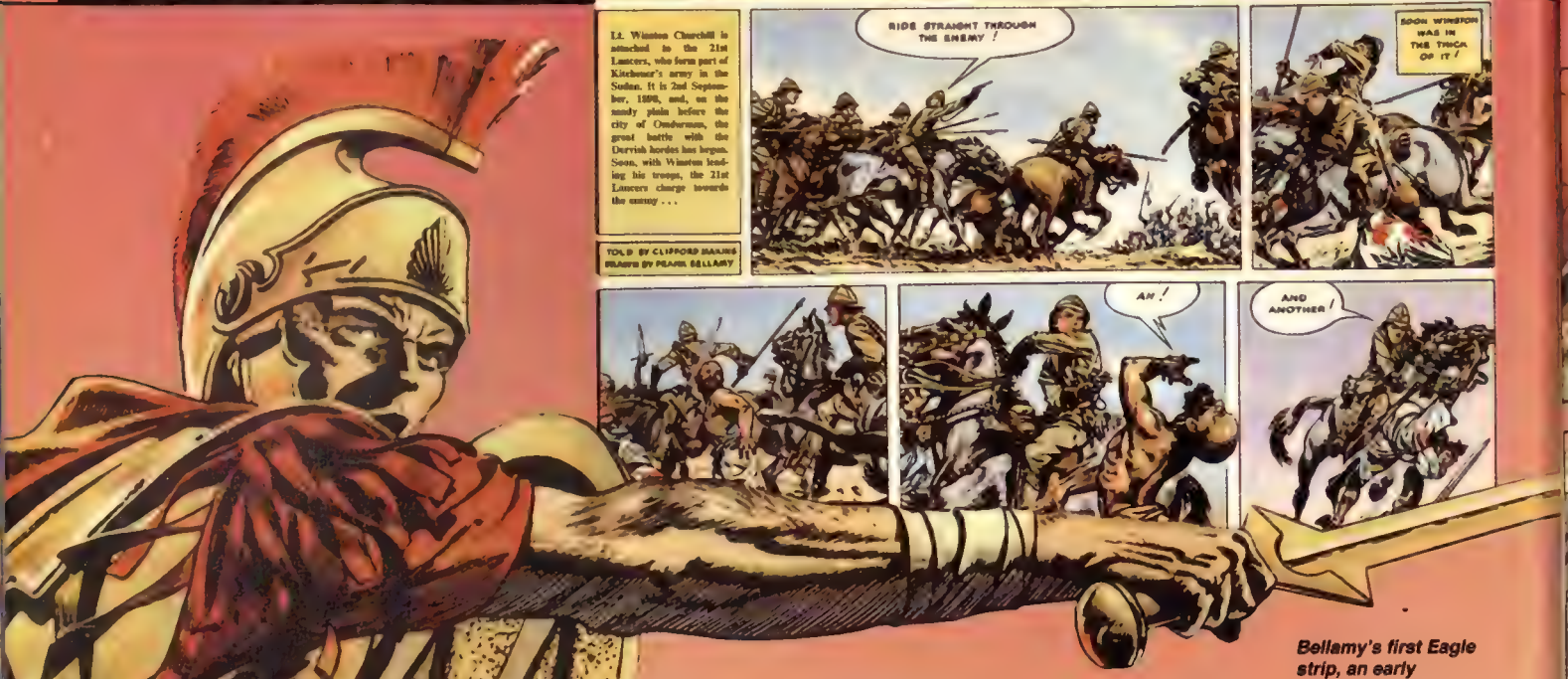


The battle broke in all its fury. King Arthur's knights swept to the attack to be met by a great force of Mordred's knights. In the bitter clash that followed, many knights were tumbled from their horses by the thrusting lances. Now the fateful battle had begun! Where is Lancelot? *More next week.*

© Fleetway Editions

Norman Wright was the compilor of the Dan Dare Dossier and the Eagle Classics volume reprinting Bellamy's 'Fraser of Africa' stories. Norman is an authority on the history of British comics and has written widely on that subject and many other areas of popular British culture.

HEROS the SPARTAN


The HAPPY WARRIOR
The true life story of SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL
Lt. Winston Churchill is attached to the 21st Lancers, who form part of Kitchener's army in the Sudan. It is 2nd September, 1898, and, on the sandy plain before the city of Omdurman, the great battle with the Dervish hordes has begun. Soon, with Winston leading his troops, the 21st Lancers charge towards the enemy . . .
TOLD BY CLIFFORD MAINS
DRAWN BY FRANK BELLAMY
RIDE STRAIGHT THROUGH THE ENEMY !
SOON WINSTON WAS IN THE THICK OF IT !
AH !
AND ANOTHER !

Bellamy's first Eagle strip, an early example of The Happy Warrior from 1957.

The final instalment, in *Swift* dated May 5 1956, gave the story an upbeat ending with Sir Lancelot and the rest of the Knights of the Round table swearing a solemn oath to keep peace in the land. The whole serial was a triumphant blend of movement and adventure and the story of King Arthur and his knights has never been better told in picture strip form.

The very next week *Swift* presented its readers with the first episode of 'Robin Hood and His Merry Men', a strip based on the traditional story of the famous Sherwood outlaw. Once more Bellamy produced some impeccable artwork with plenty of excitement and a good helping of humour. He managed to capture the very spirit of life in the greenwood: glistening leaves, the sunlight falling through the branches and the gnarled boughs of giant oak trees. The whole thing had a cinematic quality of movement and depth.

. . . THE SUNLIGHT FALLING THROUGH THE BRANCHES AND THE GNARLED BOUGHS . . .

When Marcus Morris, editor of *Eagle*, offered Bellamy the opportunity to work on the comic's prestigious back page he was eager to begin, but his enthusiasm was tempered when he learnt the work was to be a biographical strip of Sir Winston Churchill.

Ever a perfectionist, he spent many hours studying a large number of photographic references and making numerous visits to the Imperial War Museum. 'The Happy Warrior', as the strip was titled, proved to be a great success not only with *Eagle* readers but also with its subject!

As the serial progressed Bellamy began to experiment with his layouts. He varied the size of frames and made use of large 'splash' panels to depict important scenes. His use of subdued shades of colour fitted the storyline perfectly and added an extra dimension to the work and by the time 'The Happy Warrior' came to its conclusion, in September 1958, Bellamy had developed his style to such an extent that he had firmly established himself as one of the foremost strip artists in the country.

Such was the impact of the piece, Hulton press reprinted it in book form almost as soon as its serialisation in *Eagle* had ended, an honour that was only enjoyed by one other 'back page biography'.

DAN DARE

Bellamy's next subject was another biography, this time an historical biblical epic based on the life of David entitled 'The Shepherd King'. The work gave Frank Bellamy an opportunity to consolidate the style he had been developing with 'The Happy Warrior'.

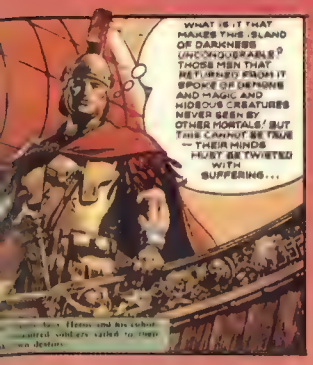
In April 1959 he began 'The Travels of Marco Polo', his third back page biographical strip for *Eagle*, but changes were afoot and he was not given the chance to finish the serial. Early in 1959 Hulton Press was taken over by Odhams and the new owners wanted to see some changes. They decided that Dan Dare, the cover character of *Eagle*, was dated and needed a face lift. They wanted someone who would inject a new vitality into the character and asked Frank Bellamy if he would take on the job.

Bellamy was uneasy about taking over a character created and nurtured by another artist but was eventually persuaded on the understanding that his commitment to the strip would only be for one year.

Dan Dare occupied the first two pages of *Eagle* and to help him with the work he had the assistance of Don Harley and Keith Watson – both members of Frank Hampson's team of Dan Dare artists. Bellamy was very much a lone wolf when it came to his work, and so to resolve the problem of sharing the two Dan Dare pages he arranged for Harley and Watson to work on one of the pages in London while he completed the other page in his studio at home. Despite the difficulties encountered with such an arrangement, Bellamy was able to create some stunning pages of artwork that glowed vividly with life.

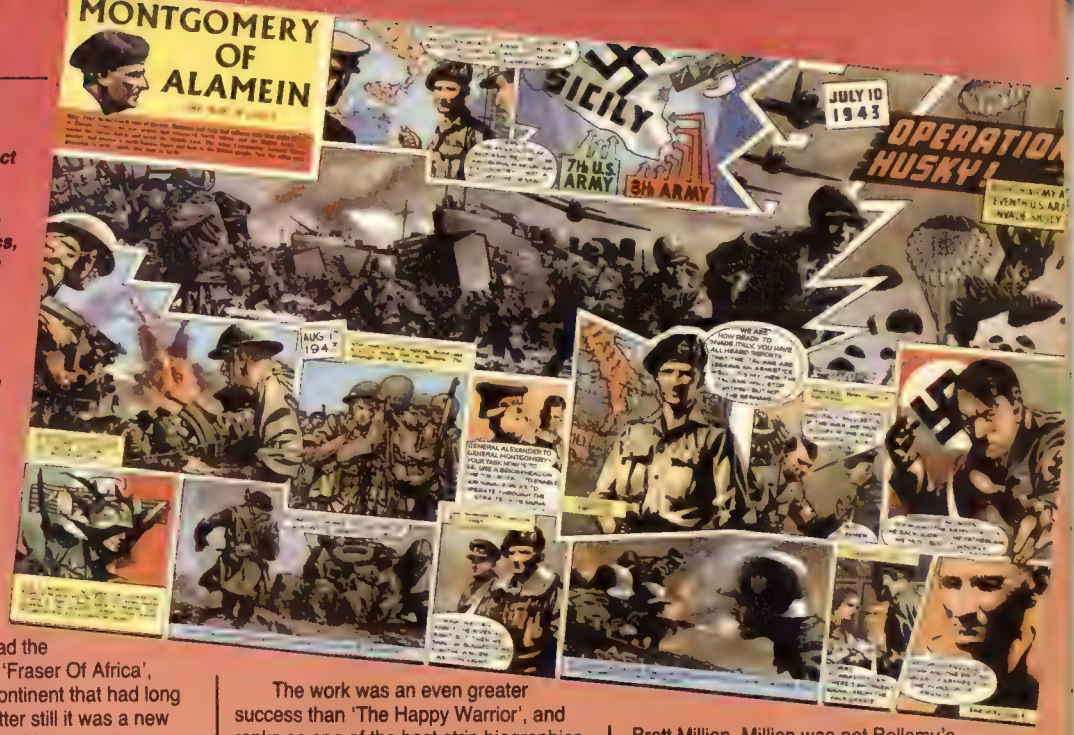
Purists may decry the removal of Frank Hampson from the Dan Dare strip, and there is no doubt the spaceman's creator endowed the galactic hero with a unique magic, but as the new proprietors of *Eagle* were determined to change the artist, there could have been no better

Bellamy's unhappiness with the Dan Dare strip did not detract from his work. This example from 1959.


WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES THIS ISLAND OF DARKNESS UNCONQUERABLE? THOSE MEN THAT RETURNED FROM IT SPOKE OF DEMONS AND MAGIC AND HIDEOUS CREATURES NEVER SEEN BY OTHER MORTALS! BUT THIS CANNOT BE TRUE — THEIR MINDS MUST BE TWISTED WITH SUFFERING...

Often considered Bellamy's finest moment, the fantasy Heros the Spartan from Eagle (1962).

The dynamic impact of Bellamy's art increased as he experimented with layout and graphics, seen here in Eagle (1962).



choice than Frank Bellamy: he may not have had every button in place on Dan's uniform but he introduced a brand of dynamic action to the strip that had never been seen before.

When his time on Dan Dare was up, Bellamy had the chance to work on 'Fraser Of Africa', a strip set on the continent that had long fascinated him. Better still it was a new venture and he was able to create every facet of it himself. He set about it with unbounded enthusiasm.

He wanted to limit his palette to brown, yellow and orange to give the strip a hot, sun-scorched look. He submitted tests to the printers, who were sceptical and told him there was little chance of his idea working. To his delight the tests were successful and Bellamy began work on game warden Martin Fraser's first adventure, 'The Lost Safari'.

The result was something entirely new in comics: a strip that not only vividly depicted life on the African plains, but also used colour in an almost surreal manner. The 'Fraser of Africa' trilogy was one of Frank Bellamy's greatest triumphs and it remained one of the artist's own particular favourites. It was reprinted by Hawk Books Ltd. in 1990.

The work was an even greater success than 'The Happy Warrior', and ranks as one of the best strip biographies of all time. Both 'The Happy Warrior' and 'Montgomery of Alamein' were reprinted by Dragons Dream in 1981 under the title 'High Command'.

HEROS

Bellamy's next serial for *Eagle* was 'Heros The Spartan', a fantasy adventure worlds away from the gunfire of World War Two. Heros was a swashbuckling hero of the ancient world who encountered danger and fantastic adventure in a sword and sorcery world. The artist relished his work on the strip, and although it did not require the research needed for the Churchill and Montgomery serials, it often took the artist an entire week to create some of the detail filled colour spreads.

It was a project in which his imagination could be given full rein and for which he created giant warrior tribes, sea monsters and other weird and wonderful creatures. The pages throbbed with grim warriors battling their way through a harsh world. The adventures, set in and beyond the Roman Empire, substituted the pageantry of King Arthur's court with the gritty, blood-soaked 'reality' of those barbarous days.

Bellamy drew four series of Heros adventures, the last in July 1965. It is the work most associated with the artist and a highwater mark in the history of fantasy adventure strips.

During one of his breaks from Heros, Bellamy produced a colour strip for *Boys World*, another Odhams owned comic. It was a science fiction adventure entitled 'The Ghost World' featuring a hero named Brett Million. Million was not Bellamy's creation, an earlier adventure of the tough spaceman, drawn by Eidlestein and Langford, had previously filled the comic's colour centre spread.

The Bellamy drawn strip featured Million on the planet Eisen, a world where the inhabitants could move at incredible speed. It was well drawn but lacked the special magic that Bellamy had woven into his work for *Eagle*.

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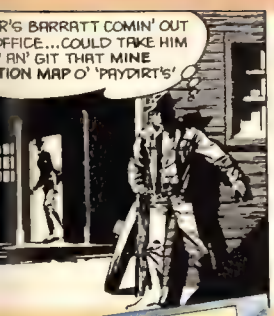

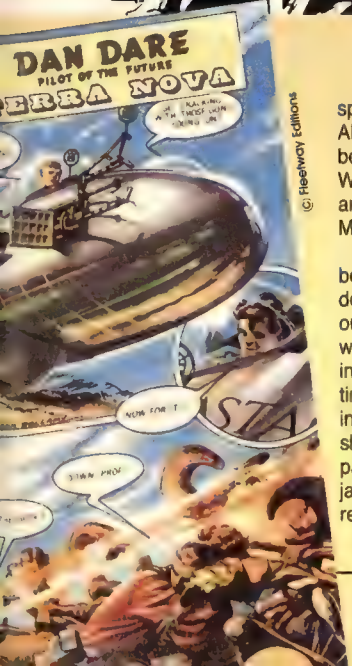

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Frank Bellamy's first full colour centre spread for *Eagle* was 'Montgomery of Alamein', an 18 episode biography which began in March 1962. As with 'The Happy Warrior' it required extensive research and a degree of co-operation from Montgomery himself.

Unlike the Churchill strip, Frank began it with a confidence and determination to make it something outstanding. Once again he experimented with colour, conveying the feel of individual frames with carefully chosen tints and tones. He became even bolder in the way he broke up his pages, using shaped panels to depict movement, wide panoramic frames to portray battles and jagged edged illustrations to draw reader's attention to important events.

... BELLAMY WAS ABLE TO CREATE SOME STUNNING PAGES OF ARTWORK THAT GLOWED VIVIDLY WITH LIFE.

An unpublished project for Eagle was a full colour strip version of Rider Haggard's African romance, 'King Solomon's Mines'. The strip was never finished and the few pages that were completed remained unpublished. All we have is a tantalising taster of what may well have been another masterpiece.

THUNDERBIRDS

In January 1966 Frank Bellamy began work on a strip version of 'Thunderbirds', the Gerry Anderson T.V. puppet series that has recently enjoyed a revival on BBC 2. Anderson's futuristic puppets were incredibly popular in the late 1960s and their exploits were followed by avid fans in TV *Century 21*, a comic that devoted a large percentage of its pages to the characters, including pride of place on the comic's full colour centre pages.

At first the Thunderbirds strip ran right across the spread allowing the artist complete freedom of layout. But following its popularity with continental and American audiences, a centre gutter was introduced splitting the weekly instalment into two distinct pages, making it easier to fit the formats of foreign comics.

Despite the limitations of having to depict rather 'wooden' characters, Bellamy consistently created imaginative spreads for the series throughout his four year stint on the strip. It is no exaggeration to say that his 'Thunderbirds' strip has been a contributing factor to the characters continuing popularity and his work has featured in all the revivals of the strip including the latest reprinting in *Thunderbirds – The Comic*, published by Fleetway Editions.

More dynamic layouts for Thunderbirds from TV21.

Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, Bellamy contributed to many quality periodicals including *The Sunday Times, Look And Learn* and *Radio Times.* In 1971 he took over the 'Garth' strip in the *Daily Mirror.* The muscle-bound adventurer had been created in 1943 and drawn for most of its existence by Steve Dowling. Bellamy brought a vitality to the character and made him very much his own. He worked on 'Garth' until his untimely death in 1976.

Frank Bellamy was a perfectionist who created some of the best colour work ever to appear in comics. His meticulously drawn strips were always vibrant and full of life and action. He had that rare gift of being able to captivate his audience from the moment their eyes encountered the first frame of one of his strips.

FRANK BELLAMY STRIPOGRAPHY

The following checklist was compiled by J. David Jackson & Steve Holland.

Comic Strips

Monty Carstairs [in *Mickey Mouse Weekly*]
The Secret of the Sands, 25 July 1953–12 Sept 1953
The Mystery of the Musical Box, 19 Sept 1953–5 Dec 1953
The Mystery of the Black Pearls, 12 Dec 1953–20 Mar 1954
The Men From the East, 27 Mar 1954–26 June 1954
Walt Disney's Living Desert [in *Mickey Mouse Weekly*]
Walt Disney's Living Desert, various 1954
Swiss Family Robinson [in *Swift*, by Clifford Makins]
Swiss Family Robinson, 9 Oct 1954–16 July 1955 [v1/30–v2/29]
King Arthur And His Knights [in *Swift*, by Clifford Makins]
King Arthur And His Knights, 30 July 1955–5 May 1956 [v2/31–v3/18]
Robin Hood [in *Swift*, by Clifford Makins]
Robin Hood And His Merry Men, 12 May 1956–16 Feb 1957 [v3/19–v4/8]
Robin Hood And Maid Marion, 23 Feb 1957–17 Aug 1957 [v4/9–v4/33]
The Happy Warrior – The True Life Story of Winston Churchill [in *Eagle*, by Clifford Makins]
The Happy Warrior, 4 Oct 1957–6 Sept 1958 [v8/40–v9/36]
[reprinted in *The Happy Warrior* (Hulton, 1958), *High Command* (Dragon's Dream, 1981)]
The Shepherd King – The Story of David [in *Eagle*, by Clifford Makins]
The Shepherd King, 13 Sept 1958–11 Apr 1959 [v9/37–v10/15]
The Travels of Marco Polo [in *Eagle*, by Chad Varrah]
The Travels of Marco Polo, 18 Apr 1959–6 June 1959 [v10/16–v10/23]
Dan Dare – Pilot of the Future [in *Eagle*, by Eric Eden]
Terra Nova, 29 Aug 1959–21 Nov 1959 [v10/28–v10/40]
Trip To Trouble, 28 Nov 1959–12 Mar 1960 [v10/41–v11/9]
Project Nimbus, 19 Mar 1960–9 July 1960 [v11/10–v11/28]
Fraser of Africa [in *Eagle*, by George Beardmore]
Lost Safari, 6 Aug 1960–28 Jan 1961 [v11/32–v12/4]
The Ivory Poachers, 4 Feb 1961–20 May 1961 [v12/5–v12/20]
The Slavers, 27 May 1961–12 Aug 1961 [v12/21–v12/32]
[reprinted in *Fraser of Africa* (Hawk Books, 1990)]
Montgomery of Alamein [in *Eagle*, by Clifford Makins]
Montgomery of Alamein, 10 Mar 1962–7 July 1962 [v13/10–v13/27]
[reprinted in *High Command* (Dragon's Dream, 1981)]
Heros the Spartan [in *Eagle*, by Tom Tully]
The Island of Darkness, 27 Oct 1962–2 Mar 1963 [v13/43–v14/9]
The Eagle of the Fifth, 9 Mar 1963–26 Oct 1963 [v14/10–v14/43]
Axe of Argath, 6 June 1964–17 Oct 1964 [v15/23–v15/42]
The Slave Army, 27 Feb 1965–24 July 1965 [v16/9–v16/30]
[reprinted in b/w halftone in *Warrior* 1–5, 1974–75]
[in *Eagle Annual* 1966]
The Wolf Men
Brett Million [in *Boys World*, by Ken Bulmer]
The Ghost World, 7 Dec 63–25 Apr 1964 [v1/46–v2/17]
Thunderbirds [in *TV Century 21*, by Alan Fennell]
Thunderbirds, 15 Jan 1966–22 Oct 1966, 10 Dec 1966–6 Sept 1969 [Nos. 52–92, 99–242]
[reprinted in *TV Action* 71–77, *Thunderbird Holiday Special 1971, Action 21 Nos. 1–10, Century 21* No. 1 et al, *Thunderbirds The Comic 1* – present]
[in *TV 21 & Joe 90*]
Thunderbirds, 27 Sept 1969–18 Oct 1969 [Nos. 1–4]
The Pit And the Pendulum [in *The Sunday Citizen Sunday Extra*]
The Pit And the Pendulum, 1966 (based on Edgar Allen Poe)
Captain Scarlet & the Mysterons [in *TV 21*, by Angus Allan]
Captain Scarlet & the Mysterons (covers only) Nos. 185, 186, 192, 193, 210
Dr. Who [in *Radio Times*]
Dr. Who in "Colony in Space", 10 Apr 1971
Garth [in *Daily Mirror*, by James Edgar]
Sundance, 12 July 1971–11 Oct 1971 (started by John Allard)
The Cloud of Balthus, 12 Oct 1971–27 Jan 1972
The Orb of Trimandias, 28 Jan 1972–22 May 1972
Wolf Man of Ausensee, 23 May 1972–6 Sept 1972
People of the Abyss, 7 Sept 1972–23 Dec 1972
The Women of Glaba, 27 Dec 1972–10 Apr 1973
Ghost Town, 11 Apr 1973–12 July 1973
The Mask of Atacamba, 13 July 1973–25 Oct 1973
The Wreckers, 26 Oct 1973–18 Feb 1974
The Beast of Ultor, 19 Feb 1974–5 June 1974
Freak Out to Fear, 6 June 1974–27 Sept 1974
Bride of Jenghiz Khan, 28 Sept 1974–14 Jan 1975
The Angels of Hell Gap, 15 Jan 1975–2 May 1975
The Doomsmen, 3 May 1975–15 Aug 1975
The Bubble Man, 16 Aug 1975–28 Nov 1975
The Beautiful People, 29 Nov 1975–16 Mar 1976
The Spanish Lady, 17 Mar 1976–7 Aug 1976
Ghost Town, 8 Aug 1976–6 Oct 1976 (reprinted)
The Man Hunt, 7 Oct–1976–25 Oct 1976 (completed by Martin Asbury)
[reprinted in *Daily Mirror Book of Garth* (IPC) 1975, 1976, *Daily Strips* (John Dakin) Nos. 1 (*The Bride of Jenghiz Khan*), 3 (*The Spanish Lady*), 7 (*The Doomsmen*), *Menomonee Falls Gazette, If* (Italian reprints), *Garth* (Titan Books) – *The Cloud of Balthus* (1985), *The Women of Galba* (1985)]
Swade [in *Ally Sloper*]
Swade, September 1976 [No. 1]

Books

Doctor Who – Timeview (Who Dares Publishing, 1985) commentary by David Bellamy
Fraser of Africa (Hawk Books, 1990) introduced by Norman Wright
The Happy Warrior (Hulton, 1958) introduced by Marcus Morris
High Command (Dragon's Dream, 1981) introduced by Robert Fitzgerald

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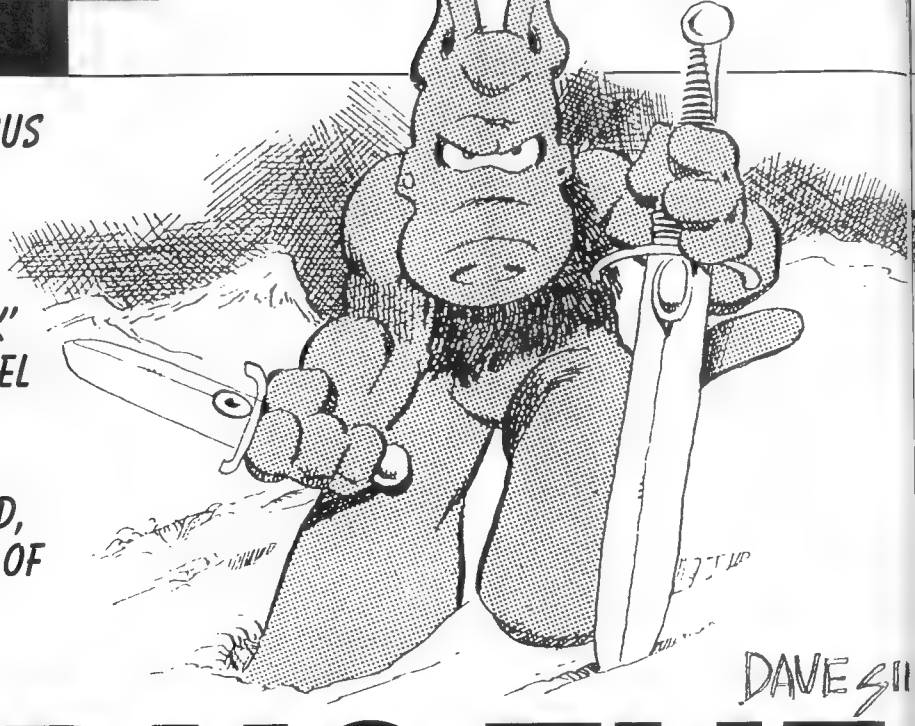
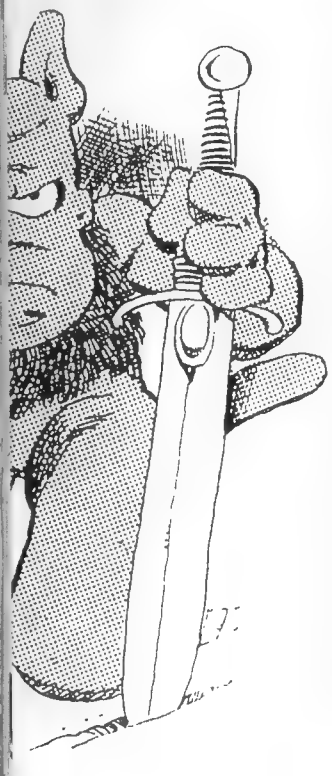
ACCORDING TO ALAN MOORE, CEREBUS JUST KEEPS GETTING BETTER AND BETTER. THE MAN HAS A POINT. FOURTEEN YEARS AGO DAVE SIM UNLEASED 'CEREBUS THE AARDVARK' ONTO THE WORLD IN A GRAND NOVEL PROSPECTIVELY SLATED FOR 300 ISSUES. SIM RECENTLY PASSED THE HALFWAY MARK ON THIS QUEST AND, AS MOORE POINTS OUT, THE QUALITY OF THE PRODUCT IS NOT LACKING



CEREBUS THE

COMIC COLLECTOR'S DAVE DICKSON TALKS TO DAVE SIM, THE CREATOR OF CEREBUS THE AARDVARK



Cerebus is a labour of love for Sim who writes, draws, edits and publishes the book. His confrontations with both Marvel who were unhappy with his spoof of Wolverine, and the on going battle with distributors, made him a marked man. Dave Sim is a thorn in the side of the comics industry. After all he has proved it* can *be done; that it is possible to produce your own comic and play by your own rules in a market-place governed by two giants. Dave Sim may not be Mr Popular but you'd be hard pushed to find anyone who didn't respect both the man and his achievements. All this* and *he's a Rolling Stones fan!

Cerebus, by Sim's own admission, began life as a Barry Windsor-Smith clone. Dave Sim desperately wanted to be Smith, and Cerebus was his vehicle. However, it didn't take long for that ambition to fall by the wayside; with the introduction of the 'High Society' storyline (issue 26 onwards) Cerebus had been transformed into a biting social, political and religious satire. Today Cerebus has few, if any, peers with its fine art and acerbic wit, crisp, intelligent dialogue and thought provoking scenarios. All that and funny too.

To the uninitiated Cerebus looks to be a treacherous minefield with its convoluted, almost impenetrable plot and its 'other-worldly' setting. Cerebus clearly does not take place on this planet, nor could its continuity fit easily into any other comic universe. Despite that, Cerebus' greatest come-on is its humour. It is not a 'funny animal' strip, but it is funny. Cerebus has a kind of wry and twisted humour that, naturally enough, neatly fits its creator. A scene in the 'Church and State' novel, 'High Society's' successor, caused a ruckus on the letters page:-

Cerebus, having become pope, is addressing a huge crowd, conning all their gold pieces out of them. A mother holds up her screeching baby and asks Cerebus to bless him. Cerebus takes the baby, telling the crowd he is about to teach them a valuable lesson. He blesses the child and then hurls him away. The moral, he says, is that you can get just what you asked for and still not be happy (issue 66).

You do, undoubtedly, need a somewhat perverse sense of humour to appreciate Cerebus. But there is more slapstick humour, such as the Roach and his multifarious superhero incarnations; Elrod, Sim's spoof of Michael Moorcock's Elric, who speaks like Foghorn Leghorn; and the McGrew Brothers, an inept pair of ne'er-do-wells who suffer unduly at the hands of the aardvark. But perhaps most prominent of Sim's comical characters is Lord Julius, his apprentice take-off of Groucho Marx.

Cerebus, then, has it all: sex, humour, politics, religion, beautiful women and dumb men . . . and its hero is an aardvark. Quite why is a question Dave Sim now refuses to address.

"It's on a short-list of about nine questions I don't answer anymore. I stopped answering them after the first five years." And Sim will not be drawn further. But on the subject of Barry Windsor-Smith, Cerebus' inspiration Sim is enthusiastic. Smith had contributed a cover and short story to 'Swords of Cerebus Vol 5' – actually receiving the work proved to be a problem.

HE CAME TO OUR CITY IN THE EARLY DAWN...
YOU SEE, HE STOOD ONLY FIVE HANDS HIGH, HAD A LENGTHY SNOUT, A LONG TAIL AND WAS COVERED WITH SHORT GREY FUR...
HE WAS, IN SHORT...
©1977 DAVE SIM
THE AARDV

"It was like pulling teeth to get it because Barry is so finicky, so meticulous. He was working on the second Conan film out in LA, doing designs and stuff. 'It's just going crazy out here, they've got me in a hotel room, they're paying all my expenses and I'm supposed to meet producer Dino De Laurentiis. I haven't met him yet and I don't know what's going on.'

"So he wanted something to keep busy with. I asked him to do a 'Swords' story on his own. He'd say: 'Well, I got it all done and it's sitting across the room but it's just not right, it just doesn't look like Cerebus, and my back teeth are aching!' I said: 'I don't care, just put it in an envelope and send it to me. If it's really bad I'll only print five million of them!'"

To get a Cerebus story from Barry Windsor-Smith was, to Sim, the ultimate accolade, proof that he had finally arrived. But Sim's list of enthusiasts makes impressive reading.

"All the people I admire and went ga-ga over in my teens and through my early 20s, virtually to a one treat me as a peer whether they're Cerebus fans or not: Howard Chaykin, Jeff Jones, Berni Wrightson, Barry Windsor-Smith, Harlan Ellison, Michael Moorcock – it's the fan's dream come true! To have aspired to one of the better spear-carriers and be admitted to the pantheon – it helps take a lot of the sting out of bad reviews. You meet the person who gave you a bad review and he has a skin condition and hasn't had a girlfriend or something like that, and I say: 'Well, I don't give a shit. Harlan Ellison likes it.' Ha!"

Sim is characteristically discarding of unfavourable criticism, but you'd never guess it by reading the letters column. Cerebus has the liveliest, not to mention the weirdest, correspondence page in comics. There the fans rule and some have even built up their own cult following!

"You should try reading all of them!" laughs Sim. "There's like the eight a month that cause my eyebrows to go up and my head to spin around like a propeller, and the other ones are just as strange, if not stranger. If I'm in a mood where I'm feeling put upon and nobody loves Dave and I feel like shit and everybody's saying: 'You're scum and I really hate you.' Well, let's show them that this month. We'll show them how really cheesy these people can get.

"There was a really obnoxious letter from a guy in issue 88 that I looked at and went: 'He's saying nasty shit about my mother. I really can't believe this.' And I thought, just to give the readers an idea of why I get really pissed off sometimes I'm going to print this. And if he sends another I'll print that, it was obnoxious: 'you think you're so hot, well you're a turd, you're crap, you're a doo-doo, you're a cah-cah.' Just vitriolic to have that arriving in the post and it's like, OK, I'll run it next time and say: 'Remember the guy from last issue who was really obnoxious, well here he is again. I can't wait to see what he writes now!'

"And if he really goes screaming over the edge all he's going to do is alienate himself from all the fans, but he does thrill those who are still buying the book but figure it's not as good as it should be and read it to go: 'I'm disappointed again' and then read the letters page and say 'I agree with *this* guy! Yeah, it sucks!'"

WELL
IT'S SNOWING
SNIF
SOW IT S SOW IT IS
FANCY THA'
I 'AVEN'T SLEP THROUGH ANUVVER AUTUMN, 'AVE I
I 'ATE IT WHEN THA' 'APPENS
CEREBUS DOESN'T THINK SO.
uh -- IS THAT HUNDRED AND FIFTY PROOF T'CAPTAIN WHISKEY?

Prince Mick from Cerebus 85.

AARDVARK

IN THE BEGINNING

Cerebus would almost be worth buying solely for the letters but the plain fact is the column is fronted by 20 glorious pages of stunning artwork and acidic scripting.

Sim's introduction to this world began as a fan – he wrote for fanzines before turning professional – and later became part of a Canadian clique who wanted to be involved in comics. He had, as he explains, two heroes.

"I started in comics with the idea that maybe someday I could be Barry Windsor-Smith, maybe someday I could be Neal Adams. Neal Adams is a better example because for a period of three or four years any character he picked up he produced the definitive version, because Neal had a very, very sophisticated art style. He redefined the whole way of telling stories and what you could get away with in a dopey little colour comic. He knew how to knock out a first class commercial art illustration in a very short period of time, so he just applied all that thinking to it.

"But he's created this whole generation of people who are doing 'Neal': 'I'm going to do the definitive Spectre', 'I'm going to do the definitive Star Spangled Kid'.

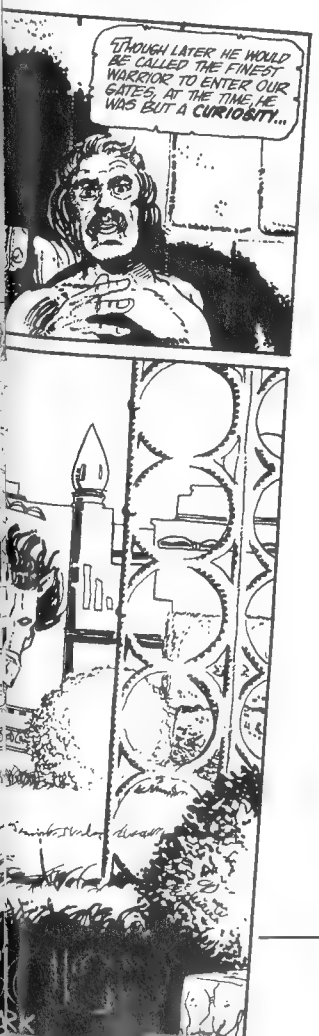
"I started off petulantly because a friend of mine, the late Gene Day, was inking at Marvel and we had started off in a crop of maybe 10 or 11 guys scattered around southern Ontario and Quebec in Canada who were fired up by Barry Windsor-Smith and Berni Wrightson and Neal Adams and it was like: 'Yeah, I'm gonna get a job in comics!'

"They would get a job, farmed out by another artist, and get all carried away that they'd done ten pages of Batman under somebody else's name, and gradually just lost the whole thing; gradually lost sight of where they were going, what they were doing. And then you still had to work. OK, you got a job at Marvel and you did two issues but the third one's five weeks late so you're going to get fired in pretty short order.

"Gene got the job, inking, and I went: 'that was it, the final bottle-neck and he got through and I didn't'. So I thought, OK, I'm going to go off and do my own comic for three issues and if it doesn't go over it will serve as samples to take to the companies."

The three issues did take off and Sim was not forced to go cap-in-hand to the major companies. Instead he is half way through his epic 6,000 page novel. He will finish, so long as he keeps to schedule, some time in 2004, by which time he will be 46 years old. And what then? Where do you go after completing a 26 year work?

Cerebus seen for the first time, from Cerebus 1.



CEREBUS WOULD ALMOST BE WORTH BUYING SOLELY FOR THE LETTERS COLUMN, BUT THE PLAIN FACT IS THE COLUMN IS FRONTED BY 20 GLORIOUS PAGES OF STUNNING ARTWORK . . .

CEREBUS IS JUST GOING TO WALK AWAY. WHAT IS GOING ON IS OF NO CONCERN TO CEREBUS
CEREBUS HAS HIS GOLD AND CEREBUS IS NOT GOING TO FALL FOR ANY STUPID TRICKS..
CEREBUS IS GOING INTO THE FIRST TAVERN HE COMES TO AND..
ON THE OTHER HAND, ONE QUICK LOOK AND CEREBUS WILL LIKELY SEE THERE IS A LOGICAL EXPLANATION FOR ALL OF THIS..
EVIL! EVIL! EVIL!
nSSSS
THEN AGAIN

The Roach, as introduced in Cerebus 11.

"Then it becomes a matter of sticking with it, because that's the other thing I wanted to demonstrate – we're going to get a whole lot further in this field if people set out to do their life's work. Instead they're all wandering around like Brett Maverick with a gun strapped on, like: 'OK, now I'm gonna go over here and Blatt! Blatt! Blatt! There, did a helluva job on that one, didn't I?' Then they go chinking outta town and wander into the next town and it's like: 'Oh, here's the local bad guy, OK – bang, bang, bang!' But all the towns are owned by Marvel and DC.

"I'm sitting in a town going: 'I'm the local sheriff, we don't like trouble here 'cos I've been here all these years and I can take care of myself, I got it all billed up'. And it's a nice, quiet, sleepy little town where everybody has a good time.

"That's it. All I'm saying is that the 26 years becomes central. If you assume you do your best work through your 20's, polish and refine it through your 30's and hope to get out with your skin intact halfway through your 40's, that's not a bad time to retire. I'm going to be working until a specific age anyway, why not set up a situation where at the end of 26 years of doing the book I have 20 mint sets of issues 1–300 and assuming the security is OK . . . like, I have 30 copies of number 1 in mint.

"Now, at the time it went up to $50 a copy I in effect had assets there of $1,500. At the time that wasn't a tempting amount of money. Now that it's selling at $300–400, with 30 copies that's $12,000, which, five years ago, would have been really tempting. 'Let's ditch these and give ourselves a financial cushion'. Now it would be as ridiculous as selling them all for £1,500. And you just project down the road . . .

"It was a good motivation to get through those first five years. Once you get there it becomes a peripheral kind of thing. I really imagine when I'm done, my 300 issues will be donated to specific comics museums or whatever. It would be like you'd donate any work like that to a library."

Sim clearly has his eyes set on his self-imposed target of issue 300 and is little disposed to allow the likes of movie offers to distract, or, heaven forbid, selling out to Marvel or DC.

"It's the same thing that happened to a lot of English country estates through the last part of the 1800's. If you sell something you own for money you don't really need, you're gradually chipping away at the edge. Maybe you're saying: 'well, I'm not doing anything with it right now, why not turn them into money?' If you don't need the money, why give them up?

"No one else has ever published Cerebus without express agreement – they get the rights to whatever fragment I decide to throw their way. It's not part of the 6,000 pages but I continue to be the exclusive publisher and disseminator of those 6,000 pages that I'm working on.

"I'm not about to sell the film rights to 'High Society' as a novel – or even sell the rights to a paperback house to put them in all the Walden Books, you know, Dave Sim's 'High Society' paperback sized – 'We're gonna move a million of them, kid! Well, we didn't want to just do a million of them we're going to buy the film rights, as well.'

"So it's like a $1 million film and Dave walks away with $200,000 – great, Dave, but a shitty movie's gonna come out of it made by somebody that I don't know and for which I have to take the rap. And the comic becomes peripheral, it either becomes, as *Howard the Duck* became: 'Oh, yeah, that comic based on a lousy movie'. Or, if the movie's successful: 'Oh, I didn't know it was a comic book'.

PERIPHERAL SIDELIGHT

"I have to keep my thing centre-stage. As soon as you bring television, or the movies, or records or any of the other larger media into it you become a peripheral sidelight. You can't help but do, because the public is more used to: 'This is going to be a made for TV movie!' Regardless of it being based on a comic book, if it's successful nobody's going to know.

"Let's say it's not even a movie but a stuffed toy. Sure, the natural thing to do is go to a big company like DC, let them do the Elfquest trip on Cerebus. You go to the guy that makes the Garfield stuffed toy and say: 'Make us a Cerebus.' And a year from now the Cerebus stuffed toy is outselling the Garfield four-to-one but nobody has a clue there's a comic book about it or that it has any more depth or richness than just an aardvark with a sword.

"It's jeopardising it to the 30,000 (readers) that I've got who allow me enormous latitude. If it was DC they'd be saying: 'These are our 1.5 million DC fans, and DC fans don't like things like this. And in a business sense we don't like things like this, so we want you to change things that we think are going to get us into legal trouble' or whatever. Inside of three years I'd give up the book, just go: 'Fine, nobody gets the next issue, I'm pissed off . . .'

"I'm pissed off because I introduced the impurity and then got jittery and frustrated and angry and bored because the impurity got bigger. Nobody is just going to say: 'Yeah, we'll be happy to make $20,000 off Dave every year for the next ten years'. No, they figure they're gonna make $20,000 this year, next year they wanna make a million, the year after that they wanna make it $5 million. And if you have to take that into consideration you have to come up with $5 million ideas. I don't know if I've got $5 million ideas.

"I couldn't write the X-Men, I could not do what Chris (Claremont) did – and he did it month in month out.

"The problem there is they pass judgement in their context. DC is not going to just say: 'Sure, we'll start printing in colour and we'll start sending you this amount of money every month'. No, they want to sell it off to a film company that they know, want to sell it for a radio show, for a newspaper strip, for the whole Superman/Batman treatment. They jeopardise what I'm trying to do."

SIM CLEARLY HAS HIS EYES SET ON HIS SELF IMPOSED TARGET OF ISSUE 300

The baby throwing sequence from Cerebus 66.

MOST HOLY WILL BLESS YOUR CHILD AND TEACH YOU A VALUABLE LESSON ABOUT LIFE AT THE SAME TIME
BLESS YOU
SHRIEK
THE VALUABLE LESSON IS THAT YOU CAN GET WHAT YOU WANT AND STILL NOT BE VERY HAPPY
MY BABY
MY BABY
YOU'RE WELCOME

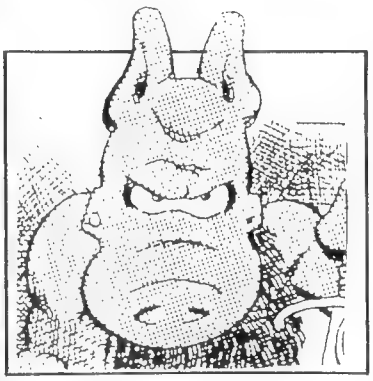
Sim has an apparent lack of concern for his audience. Doesn't it matter to him that he frequently infuriates his readership even as far as driving many away permanently? Well, yes and no.

"That's not the criteria I use. The criteria I use personally, the thing that for me makes it worthwhile, is that Harlan Ellison likes it, that Barry Windsor-Smith likes it, that Michael Moorcock likes it, that somebody who can write an intelligent review for the *Atlantic Monthly* likes it and sees a lot of what I'm putting into it – that's what I get out of it.

"I take it for granted that because that's who I'm going for, I'm going to annoy major chunks of the constituency quite frequently until it drops off to levels I thought I would achieve at the age of 30, say 22,000. I'm still perfectly content, there's a financial cushion there now. Even if it drops below that I can still keep financing all this, saying exactly what I want to say."

It would be easy to see Dave Sim as arrogant – and to a degree he is – but you can't escape the thought that anyone who allows his readers virtually a free hand at the back of his comic must care something for them. There's the sneaking suspicion that behind that brash, tough-guy exterior there lurks, somewhere well-hidden, a heart in the right place. His enthusiasms – Cerebus, the Rolling Stones, comics in general – are infectious. As to his favourite comics, well no real surprises there.

"*Love & Rockets*. If (publisher) Gary Groth could just get every comic shop to hire one person with a mohawk dyed purple to stand in the front window and read *Love & Rockets*, that book would be selling 75,000 copies tomorrow. The fact that it gets addressed in the rock press, becomes one of Rolling Stones' 'What's Hot and What's Not' items is going to do them the world of good because it's where their constituency is."



And as to Cerebus' constituency, who represents Sim's ideal reader?

"I'm going to paraphrase this because I can never remember what I said. Something to the effect of: I appeal to people for whom there is as great an appeal in obscurity as clarity. Cerebus is obscure and reveals itself bit by bit, and is in no great rush to do so – on average you will learn three or four pertinent things a year.

"It's one thing from there to say 'Who does it appeal to?' A specific person doesn't come to mind. But to translate it into novels – a person who likes the big hit, reads Peter Benchley's *Jaws* and gets grabbed by the first page and reads it all the way through sitting on the toilet or wherever else they go. It's gripping, spine-chilling, moves right along, a roller-coaster ride of suspense.

You can try putting that on the back of Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, but it's not. "It's not a roller-coaster ride, it's not spine-chilling, gut-wrenching, sphincter-tingling action. If you're patient it'll deliver the goods.

"And then You hit the kicker page, like on page 300, and from there it becomes the Peter Benchley *Jaws* where you're just going: 'Well, how did he resolve this, how does he resolve this irresolvable thing that he's got? Somebody's going to get what they want and somebody is not, and I can't wait to see how he works this out'."

How Cerebus works out – apart from the aardvark dying alone, unmourned and unloved – we're not going to discover for another 12 years. In the meantime Dave Sim is in the process of creating an expansive, powerful and evocative work that, impossibly enough, as Alan Moore put it, keeps getting better and better. It's a rare work and you should savour its beauty. I just hope nothing fatal happens to him before issue 300.

Dave Dickson is a rock journalist who has worked for* Kerrang, Raw *and more recently* Rock Power, *for whom he has recently interviewed Clive Barker amongst others.

"...MY DAUGHTER RED SOPHIA! SHE MUST SEE THE MAN DIE SLOWLY- YOU SEE HE HAS BE-SMIRCHED HER HONOUR AND MUST SUFFER THE PENALTY...
YOU WILL DOUBTLESS APPRECIATE MY COMPANY, SHORT GREY ONE!

CEREBUS

In 1977, Dave Sim drew his first Aardvark in "A Boy and his Aardvark" for *Power Comics 1*, but it was with *Cerebus the Aardvark 1* that he launched the most critically acclaimed comic character of independent history. Sim, born in Hamilton, in May 1956, created a series whilst working in a local comic shop called Now and Then Books. It was here that he met Denis Loubert, who came in to enquire whether the shop would sell her proposed fanzine, *Cerberus*.

The name of the publisher was to be Aardvark-Vanaheim – a combination of the two names proposed by Deni's sister and brother. Dave drew an aardvark mascot as part of the logo (later claiming that he 'didn't know how to draw a Vanaheim'); it was only then they realised Deni had misspelled Cerberus. Still, the finished fanzine was sent to a printer with the payment, but printer promptly vanished with the lot.

The newly named aardvark mascot soon became the hero of his own book, and the 2,000 copies of *Cerebus 1*, published in December 1977 at the price of $1, are now worth around $325 each in the right condition.

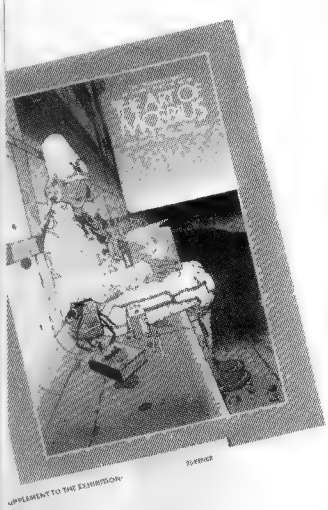
Sim's Cerebus was originally a pastiche of Robert E. Howard's Conan as written by Roy Thomas and drawn by Barry Windsor-Smith, and by issue three he had also introduced Red Sophia, another Howard-based character.

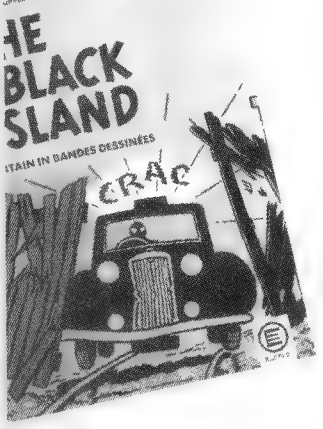
Other characters introduced over those rare early issues include Henrot the Wizard (3), Elrod of Melvinbone (4), Bran Mak Mufin (5), E'lass and Turg the Unduly Tall, and Jaka the Dancing Girl (6) and Lord Julius (14, with which issue *Cerebus* became a monthly title). Captain Cockroach arrived with issue 11, although it wasn't until 54 that he became Wolveroach – after a cameo in 53.

EURO COMICS
A DAZZLING RESPECTABILITY

PAUL GRAVETT TAKES US ON A TRIP AROUND THE ADULT-ORIENTATED EUROPEAN MARKET

Comics aren't "comics" in Europe – they've blossomed and mutated into something else entirely: elegant, hard-back strip albums and smart, well-produced magazines for an adult readership.





These caught on years ago, and without the suspect respectability of being re-packaged as 'graphic novels' or labelled 'suggested for mature readers'. The stigma that so-called cultural guardians in the U.S. attach to the very word 'comics' – branding them as funny and strictly for kids – doesn't trouble Europe's three most progressive comic-producing nations: France, Spain and Italy, where comics are enjoyed by a main-stream adult audience.

The French christened them BDs or *bandes dessinées*, an almost clinical term for 'designed strips'; Spanish comics, or *tebeos*, take their name from T.B.O., one of the founding picture papers.

The Italians read *fumetti*, literally 'little smokes' – their visualisation of speech balloons. All these terms are free from prejudice and preconception, as open to interpretation and possibility as film or theatre. Today, this openness of style and subject is crossing the Channel and Atlantic and encouraging British and American creators to expand their expressive range.

There's an irony in this migration, however, because so many of the developments in the comics medium in Europe can be traced directly back to innovations in America. It was wholly due to his seeing the vivid turn-of-the-century American newspaper strips – for example, George McManus' 'Bringing Up Father' with its sharp dialogue and linework – that Hergé pioneered, the practise of speech balloons in Tintin in 1929. Most of his European contemporaries were still waffling on in banks of torpid text beneath wordless panels.

The late Milton Caniff's black-and-white impressionism in 'Terry and the Pirates', another exported daily strip, was the starting point for Italy's Godfather of *fumetti*, Hugo Pratt, and dozens more after him.

If the sight gags and satire of those Gallic charmers 'Asterix' and 'Obelix' recall the classic *Mad* comics from the 1950s, it's because writer René Goscinny was a close friend and collaborator of *Mad* scientist Harvey Kurtzman. And, as we'll see, the taboo-shattering started by American underground comix in the late 1960s had global repercussions, especially in France's explosion in the early 1970s of 'adults only' BD magazines.

The real irony is that so much of the groundwork for the modern European phenomenon originated in the U.S. If the climate had been different politically and culturally, who knows, perhaps the richness of today's Euro-comics could have blossomed in America, too.

Meantime, there has never been a better time to 'do comics' Euro-style. For some of the sightseeing, you need travel no further than your local book or comic shop to sample Europe's finest. Many of these publications are now translated into English, so language is no longer a barrier – they don't just look good, they read good, too. Use this survey of key creators as a tourist guide. The route you choose is up to you.

Influence

After Hergé, no other French-language comics artist has exerted as powerful an influence on Euro-comics as Moebius. He came from classical tradition, illustrating the lush Wild West adventures of 'Lieutenant Blueberry', which he still draws under his real name of Jean Giraud. But there was another, unvoiced side to him, a Moebius side named after the German mathematician's famous loop of twisted paper.

He released this persona, tentatively at first beginning in 1973 in short experimental stories. But by 1975, the Moebius spirit was uncontainable and found its outlet in a radical new adult magazine, *Metal Hurlant*, which he helped co-found. With total freedom to write and draw his personal fantasy universe, Moebius produced his masterpieces, the strange silent, dazzingly coloured 'Arzach' and the totally improvised, open-ended 'Airtight Garage'.

An aborted collaboration with Alexandro Jodorowsky, the Chilean filmmaker, on designs for a film of *Dune* resulted in them joining together to craft new comics stories, notably the six-part 'Incal' series featuring the bumbling hero John Difool. Moebius was one of the first BD imagineers to make his name in America; first in the late '70s in *Heavy Metal* magazine, then in the invaluable Epic Graphic Novels series, started in 1987, followed by the 'Incal' saga.

After Moebius' initial reinvention of himself, he has constantly evolved as he sets himself new challenges. He has worked on the design and storyboards of films such as *Tron* and *Alien*, and has inspired many others. In his most personal recent work, he has shifted from marijuana-influenced dreamscapes with stone pterodactyls to a Zen-influenced quest for simplicity and purity in 'The Gardens of Aedena'.

At the same time, his childhood romance with the fireworks and melodrama of American superheroes has brought forth his dynamic 'Silver Surfer' story with co-creator Stan Lee, printed in pulp-paper Marvel comic-books.

Now living in Santa Monica, Moebius is having as galvanising an effect on American comics in the 1980s as he had on French BDs in the 1970s.

Science fantasy is also the principal genre of another French *bandes dessinateur*, Enki Bilal. But his visions are in a much darker, more sombre vein. They reflect his upbringing in a war-torn Eastern Europe (he was born in Belgrade, Yugoslavia) and his absorption of the films of his fellow Eastern Europeans, particularly those of Tarkowsky and Zulawsky.

In the '70s, Bilal made his name

CHINI A LONGUEMENT PARLE AVEC VITTORIO HIER SOIR... SAIT-ELLE OU IL EST ALLÉ... PAR DESIR DE TROUVER SA PROVENDE IL MET TOUT LA TRIBU EN DANGER...
CHINI NE SAIT RIEN PÈRE!
LES ATTAQUES CONTRE LA DILIGENCE ET LE TRADING POST REMONTENT À TROP LONGTEMPS POUR QUE GOG ET MAGOG PUISSENT RENIFLER UNE PISTE...
HM... IL FAUDRAIT ATTIRER UN DE CES MARAUDEURS À PROXIMITÉ DU CAMP...
DANS LA SIERRA LES HEURES ONT PASSÉ. ET SOUDAIN...

© the credited artists and/or their representatives

'The Woman Trap' by Enki Bilal – a vision of future Britain controlled by roving gangs.

with several albums written by Pierre Christin, Lovecraftian allegories on terrorism and threats to the region's cultural identity, contemporary fables that mixed the fantastic and the political.

With his *Gods in Chaos* album in 1980, Bilal truly arrived as both writer and artist of this drama set in a decadent future where an Egyptian god borrows an Earthman's body.

The same characters reappear in *The Woman Trap*, but that album's principal character is Jill Bioskop, a troubled journalist with chalk-white skin and blue lips and hair, whose 'scriptwalker' sends her reports back into the past. A trail of death follows her from London's tribal street-wars to the ill-fated return of a space mission near Berlin.

Bilal's brooding use of painted colour – earthy, oppressive, sensuous, atmospheric – prompted director Alain Resnais to commission Bilal to design sets for his first film *Life Is a Bed of Roses*. The collaboration continued when Resnais advised Bilal as he made his own directing debut with the film *Bunker Palace Hotel*.

Two faces of Jean Giraud – the western strip Blueberry by 'Gir', and Major Grubert from the classic The Airtight Garage by Moebius.

© the credited artists and/or their representatives

Surreal

From the field of animated films, Francis Masse brought to the *nouvelle presse*, during France's headiest period of experimentation in the early 1970s, a thoroughly unique, inimitable vision. As absurd and surreal as his worlds become, with his bowler-hatted gentlemen recalling Magritte's paintings or Beckett's plays, Masse always anchors them in scientific logic and in polemical observations on the all-too-real follies of humanity. In one world run by cars, the 'autocrats' are so short of parking space for humans they have to pile them up in bike sheds.

In another world, where every single citizen's goal in life is to keep racing ahead, the inhabitants happen to look down one day to discover the earth has disappeared under their feet and that what is keeping them rooted to the 'ground' are their personal doormats.

Like some of Robert Crumb's work, Masse's dense, detailed panels are inspired by classical engravings, which he even incorporated in his work, rearranged or collaged. More recently, the frontiers of scientific research are casually discussed in his new colour series, *Les Deux du Balcon*.

From their balcony, an arrogant expert explains to his protegé the latest theories on sleep, love, and the weather, which are enacted in bizarre tableaux below them. Accused of being difficult and overly intellectual, Masse stands apart in the comics medium as a wildly satirical Leonardo da Vinci, bridging the worlds of nonsense and science.

Nightmare

In a recurring nightmare, Jacques Tardi stands in front of a call-up poster, about to be drafted into the military. Horror of war has haunted his life, from hearing, as a child, his grandfather's experiences in World War I, to recollections of his father's six-year internment in a prison camp during World War II. Horror of war also haunts his *bandes dessinées*, either explicitly, as in the episodes of *War of the Trenches*, or generally, in his pacifist and pessimistic outlook.

Tardi's most popular commercial series, *The Extraordinary Adventures of Adele Blanc-Sec*, is a parody melodrama opening in *belle-époque* Paris, a Paris that is both realistically researched and also fantastically filled with weird mysteries. A writer of thrillers, the intrepid Adele regularly finds herself caught up in an intrigue of mad scientists, monstrous creatures and multiple murders.

The six full-colour albums, set on either side of World War I, are Tardi's best-sellers, but he derives greater satisfaction from his less formula-based, personal stories and his various collaborations.

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Jose Munoz and Carlos Sampayo's stark vision of human suffering in New York – 'Joe's Bar'.

His most remarkable solo work is the unfinished *War of the Trenches*, an anti-war fresco of highly moving incidents from the 1914–18 conflict, told in wide monochrome panels that conjure up the cinema screen.

Tardi prefers to work in black-and-white, adding weight and atmosphere with tones of grey. His best collaborations include two *film-noir* adaptations of Nestor Burma cases, from the books by Parisian crime novelist Leo Malet, and *Cockroach Killer* written by Benjamin Legrand. In the latter, Walter Eisenhower, a New York pest exterminator, stumbles upon a sinister plot to recruit unbalanced individuals to assassinate leading public figures. With his bright red overalls, the only colour in the book, Walter sticks out as the main character and the inevitable victim.

Tardi was among the first BD auteurs to break from the conventional format for albums, which were traditionally 48 pages in colour. With the support of his publishers, Casterman, and their literary approach to the medium in their new monthly magazine *A Suivre* (To Be Continued), launched in 1978, Tardi and others could create true novels or *BD romans* that ran to whatever length their telling dictated. Casting off any lingering trappings of adolescence, French comics were now growing into a new maturity.

The groundwork for these developments was laid by the underground comix in America in the late 1960s. Robert Crumb and Art Spiegelman led the way with a message that comics could be liberated, explicit, countercultural, individually expressive visually, and published by the artists for their own generation and not for children. Their message sounded a rallying call across Europe.

Ninth Art

In the aftermath of the 1968 student uprising, the French intellectual Left was ready to take up comics as it had that other American artform, jazz, and give it status. In the French roster of the arts, BD was added as 'The Ninth Art'. In other European countries, local artists emerged, responding to the underground propaganda. In Holland, there was Joost Swarte, who combined underground sensibilities with the classicism of Hergé; in Belgium, the graphic stylist Ever Meulen, and in Britain, the madcap fantasist Hunt Emerson.

Spain, however, was a late developer, as Franco's stifling state censorship forced adult comics underground on threat of imprisoning the publishers. But after the dictator's death in 1975, a wealth of new magazines sprang up, foremost among the no-holds-barred *El Vibora* (The Viper). Javier Mariscal became one of its key contributors, and since then has zigzagged from one artform to another, creating furniture for the Memphis Group in Milan, fabric patterns, club

interiors, even the official logo for the Barcelona Olympics in 1992.

He brings Mediterranean warmth and exuberance to whatever he does, mix-and-matching the Modernist influences of Kandinsky, Matisse and Klee with that of popular-culture icons like Disney, Steinberg and Michelin. His main characters, Fermin and Piker-Los Garriris, are second cousins twice removed of Krazy Kat and Mickey Mouse. Their days are filled with riding their Vespa, picking up girls, and fishing with their dog, Julien, and no matter what happens, things always turn out for the best.

Eternally optimistic, Mariscal's art teems with vitality and a feel for the '50s that remains timelessly fresh.

Funnies

Meanwhile, in Italy, Massimo Mattioli's career was firmly in children's *fumetti* funnies, where he refined his style to the purer linework of American animated cartoons in *Pinky*, tales of an absurd rabbit that always triumphs against impossible odds.

But by 1978, heeding the call of the American underground press, he helped found the adult comics *Il Male, Cannibale,* and the notorious *Frigidaire*, home for Tamburini and Liberatore's hyper-violent punk Frankenstein 'Ranxerox'. Here, Mattioli conjured up Joe Galaxy, a lunatic cocktail of sex, science fiction and Saturday morning TV, and Squeak the Mouse, a surreal silent gore-toon, in which a promiscuous tomcat is terrorised by a killer-zombie mouse.

Mattioli's brash, brightly-coloured, almost liquid Expressionist productions echo George Romero's splatter movies and Russ Meyer's exploitation films, as well as the funny animal antics of animators Tex Avery and Chuck Jones.

Warm, evocative watercolours are Jacques de Loustal's medium, in landscape panels with the narrative running as a caption. *Love Shots*, his early American vignettes of sun, swimming pools, young gigolos and faded starlets, written by Philippe Paringaux, capture moments reminiscent of a David Hockney canvas or a Wim Wenders movie.

Following his military service there, Morocco became Loustal's new fixation and the setting for a long romantic novel, again with Paringaux, entitled *Hearts of Sand*, a poisonous Hollywood-style melodrama of jealousy and passion. Their sequel, *Barney and the Blue Note*, follows a sax-player's rocky career from Paris clubs to California drugs. The accompanying text and voices 'off' and the imperturbable buildings and landscapes have the effect of distancing the reader from the characters and their futile ambitions amid the sun-soaked seediness. Loustal is one of France's modern masters of mood.

Like Loustal, Italian Lorenzo Mattotti came to comics from a training in architecture. In 1980, he formed the experimental Valvoline group with Igort, Carpinteri, Jori, and Brolli, later joined for a time by Mattioli and America's Charles Burns. Mattotti's masterpiece is *Fires*, a work that opens up so many expressive possibilities for comics that its place is assured in the medium's history.

Fires tells of a young naval officer's intense search for peace and a return to nature; we follow him from his opening thoughts on deck as he gazes at the blue ocean, to his possession by earth spirits, to the climax where he leaps into the sea as his ship explodes. To convey the story's powerful feelings and events, Mottotti adopts the vocabulary of fine art: for the crew's nightmares, the distortions of Expressionism; for the magical island, the warmth and abstract colours of Post-Impressionism; for the lighthouse, the enigmatic architecture of Edward Hopper. He uses few words, sensitively chosen and resonant, often allowing panels to breathe silently.

HE BRINGS MEDITERRANEAN WARMTH AND EXUBERANCE TO WHATEVER HE DOES . . .

The City

So pervasive is New York's mythical identity, through novels, films, television and comics, that it should come as no surprise that European creators are able to conjure up the city in their stories and often with the outsider's perceptive insights. By far the most remarkable example is provided by the symbiotic partnership of Carlos Sampayo and José Muñoz, exiled Argentinians living in Europe. Years before they ever visited the Big Apple, they were capturing with uncanny accuracy the kaleidoscope of life there, the real and the imaginary. As exiles themselves, they understand a city of exiles, living among strangers.

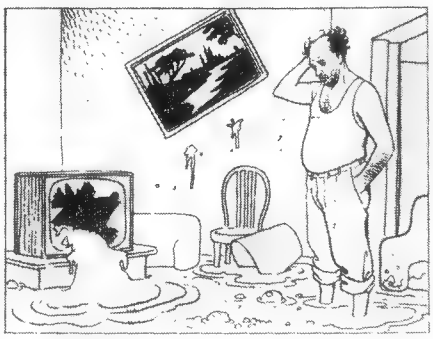
In a grim and gritty series called *Sinner*, their 'hero', Alack Sinner, a former policeman turned detective/taxi driver, is seen as he gets through another day living on the edge. His favourite watering hole, Joe's Bar, provides the setting and title for another series of intense human dramas. Sampayo's deft understated writing works seamlessly with Muñoz's stark Expressionist graphics to convey an almost painful depth of humanity.

Another stunning portrait of the metropolis forms the backdrop of *The Magician's Wife*, written by New York novelist Jerome Charyn. His phantasmagorical allegory tells of two women, a Mrs. Wednesday and her daughter Rita, and their strange love for a perverse magician. To escape her marriage to him, Rita moves to New York, but he haunts her and stirs up her terrible lycanthropic attacks. The beautiful watercolour visuals are by the Frenchman François Boucq, who also writes his own wickedly funny satirical sketches.

This brief guide inevitably leaves out the work of other equally deserving European creators: the high-seas adventures of Hugo Pratt; the ornate symbolistic cities of Schuiten and Peeters; the sizzling psychodramas of Schultheiss; the rich historical tales of Hermann; the stinging cynicism of Altan; the macabre morality of Marti. And there are many more new trailblazers stalking out further territories.

This selection is only part of the dazzling diversity of which this much-maligned medium is capable. Euro-comics are there waiting for you to discover them.

HELLO, SOS REPAIR? CAN YOU COME NOW? THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH MY SET... NO, THE PICTURE'S NOT SNOWY... WORSE, A LOT WORSE... IT SMELLS LIKE SHIT... WHAT'S GOING ON?



Milo Manara's often surreal images combined with realistic figurework have made him one of Italy's most popular artists.

Paul Gravett was editor of the acclaimed Escape *magazine which offered an international line-up of talent. He is the author of the forthcoming* New Penguin Book of Comics, *to be published in 1992.*

MEANWHILE ...

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Mail order catalogue £1-75 cheques/po payable to FISH OUT OF WATER LTD

IN DREAMS

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL ABOUT LIFE, IF DEATH WAS YOUR OLDER SISTER? MIKE CONROY TAKES A LOOK AT SANDMAN ONE OF THE COMIC WORLD'S MOST ACCLAIMED TITLES

Sandman is © DC Comics Inc

In 1987, editor Karen Berger asked Neil Gaiman if he'd be interested in writing a monthly title for DC Comics. Having said yes, Neil set about finding an appropriate character acceptable to Karen.

After his first few suggestions had been rejected, Karen agreed Neil should revive The Sandman, a character who, since his first appearance in *Adventure Comics #40*, had been part of the DC mythos for almost 50 years. In his original incarnation, Sandman was a masked crimefighter in the tradition of The Shadow, The Green Hornet et al.

Neil, however, was not interested in writing about everyday heroes (super-powered or otherwise) and took as his starting point, Jack Kirby's 1974 revival of the character. In that version, Sandman was a super-hero who resided in dreams from whence he fought crime in the 'real' world.

Neil's character bears the same name and is the Master of the Dream Dimension but that is where any similarity with the Kirby Sandman ends.

The first issue in the current series of *The Sandman* was published in 1988 (with a January 1989 cover date) and it was obvious from the beginning that this version of the Sandman owed far more to the fantasy genre than to the world of super-heroics (particularly as visualised by Jack Kirby). As created by Neil Gaiman, Sandman is a part of a much larger tapestry wherein, as Dream, he is one of the Endless. The others, his brothers and sisters, include Destiny, Death, Desire, Despair and Delirium.

Much of our own world's mythology is also woven into this tapestry: from Britain, Egypt, Greece, Japan and Scandinavia among others. There's also magic, and elements of DC's universe that are used sparingly and elegantly as Alan Moore utilised them during his much-acclaimed tenure on *Swamp Thing*.

Unlike most other comics, Sandman (or Morpheus as he is known to his kin) is not the central character, rather he is a catalyst or an impartial observer. It is to Neil's credit as a writer that he can create interesting stories that often have little to do with Sandman and without the use of any other ongoing characters.

The Sandman is not an ordinary comic book by any means. It is intelligently written and thought-provoking without falling into the trap of being pseudo-intellectual. Neil is able to weave fact with fiction, mythology and folklore to create a fascinating blend that appeals to a broad and loyal spectrum of readers.

Before *The Sandman*, Neil had written a small but interesting body of work starting with *Don't Panic: Companion to the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Following that he wrote *Violent Cases*, illustrated by Dave McKean for *Escape* and followed that with a revival of one of DC's lesser-known super-heroines: *Black Orchid* was a three-issue mini-series again illustrated by Dave McKean.

Since starting *The Sandman*, he has been chosen by Alan Moore as his successor on *Miracleman* (for Eclipse) and has written a further four-issue mini-series for DC entitled *Books of Magic*, to all intents and purposes a history of magic in the DC Universe. Each issue of that series was illustrated by a different artist (John Bolton, Scott Hampton, Charles Vess and Paul Johnson).

> SANDMAN WAS A SUPER-HERO WHO RESIDED IN DREAMS FROM WHENCE HE FOUGHT CRIME IN THE 'REAL' WORLD

He has also written, again with Dave McKean as artist, *Signal to Noise*, for *The Face* (soon to be available as a graphic novel from Gollancz) and *Good Omens*, a novel written with co-author Terry Pratchett.

Although Neil is the guiding force behind *The Sandman*, the various artists who have worked on the book are of vital importance. Foremost amongst them are Sam Keith and Mike Dringenberg who designed the original look for Sandman and, as such, are credited as co-creators. Sam's work since leaving *The Sandman* can be seen on the Dark Horse mini-series, *Aliens: Earth War* and the Wolverine story, *Blood Hungry* featured in issues 85 to 92 of *Marvel Comics Presents*.

Also worthy of mention is Charles Vess an artist known for his fantasy illustrations and work on comics in the fantasy vein. Charles illustrated *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (issue 19), a story featuring William Shakespeare together with his characters from the play of the same name. This particular story won a World Fantasy Award for best short story, the first comic ever to win the award!

Long-time collaborator, Dave McKean has provided all the covers to date. Other artists who have worked on the series include Kelley Jones, Colleen Doran, Steve Parkhouse, Chris Bachalo and Shawn McManus. As with everything else integral to the book's success, Neil has been involved in the choice of artists and has often written specifically to a given artist's strengths.

Night's Dream with art by Charles Vess) as his personal favourite with *A Dream of a Thousand Cats* (drawn by Kelley Jones and Malcolm Jones III) a close second.

If you're fed up with traditional comics and looking for something both different and more involving then you can do no better than check out a few issues of *The Sandman*; it goes from strength to strength and is well worth the time and investment. As a personal recommendation, if you just want to try one issue, pick up the recent *Sandman Special* (with its glow-in-the-dark cover) which relates the story of the Sandman's son, Orpheus, and his attempts to retrieve his dead wife from the afterworld (as per Greek mythology but with a typical Neil Gaiman flourish). ■

Mike Conroy
(with thanks to Les Chester for the burning of the midnight oil)

Mike Conroy is the owner of 'Edge of Forever', Bexleyheath's very own comic shop.

'Orpheus' – The Sandman Special – with glow in the dark highlights.

From Master of Nightmares to Master of Dreams. The old style Jack Kirby Sandman has been completely revamped.

Apart from the World Fantasy Award, *The Sandman* has won many others including Eisners for best continuing series, for best collection (*The Sandman: Doll's House* trade paperback), Harveys, Eagles and CBG's. Neil also won a Harvey for best writer and an Eisner for 'best writer on a continuing series'.

Although all the single issue stories, like the aforementioned *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, have been excellent, Neil is at his best with multi-issue tales such as *Season of Mists* which, on a simple level, involves the dispute over the ownership of hell, and *The Doll's House*. Indeed, Neil has been quoted many times as saying that he has the whole Sandman story mapped to (approximately) 50 issues after which he intends to leave the book. He has also said the entire run is intended to be one 'macro' story and that plot lines begun in issue one will be resolved at the end of his run.

Such has been the critical acclaim accorded to the work, that DC Comics has recently launched a line of Sandman merchandise including a watch, a poster, a tee-shirt (with a great slogan 'How would you feel about Life if Death was your older Sister?') and a bisque. At the same time they issued two trade paperbacks, *Sandman: Preludes & Nocturnes* and *Sandman: Dream Country* which, together with the previously released *Sandman: the Doll's House*, make the first 20 issues easily available to readers just catching on to the book now.

Along with *Miracleman*, Neil really enjoys working on *The Sandman* and has communicated his enthusiasm at conventions and through the fan press. In interviews and at conventions, he has named issue 19 (*A Midsummer*

THE SANDMAN FILE

Sandman – Master of Dreams			
1	Sleep of the Just	*Sam Keith/Mike Drigenberg*	*(Jan 1989)*
2	Imperfect Hosts	*Sam Keith/Mike Drigenberg*	*(Feb 1989)*
3	. . . Dream A Little Dream of Me	*Sam Keith/Mike Drigenberg*	*(Mar 1989)*
4	A Hope In Hell	*Sam Keith/Mike Drigenberg*	*(Apr 1989)*
5	Passengers	*Sam Keith/Malcolm Jones*	*(May 1989)*
6	24 Hours	*Mike Drigenberg/Malcolm Jones*	*(Jun 1989)*
7	Sound And Fury	*Mike Drigenberg/Malcolm Jones*	*(Jul 1989)*
8	The Sound of Her Wings	*Mike Drigenberg/Malcolm Jones*	*(Aug 1989)*
9	Tales in the Sand	*Mike Drigenberg/Malcolm Jones*	*(Sep 1989)*
The Doll's House			
10	The Doll's House	*Mike Drigenberg/Malcolm Jones*	*(Nov 1989)*
11	Moving In	*Mike Drigenberg/Malcolm Jones*	*(Dec 1989)*
12	Playing House	*Chris Bachalo/Malcolm Jones*	*(Jan 1990)*
13	"Men of Good Fortune"	*Michael Zulli/Steve Parkhouse*	*(Feb 1990)*
14	Collectors	*Mike Drigenberg/Malcolm Jones*	*(Mar 1990)*
15	Into the Night	*Mike Drigenberg/Malcolm Jones*	*(Apr 1990)*
16	Lost Hearts	*Mike Drigenberg/Malcolm Jones*	*(Jun 1990)*
Dream Country			
17	Calliope	*Kelley Jones/Malcolm Jones*	*(Jul 1990)*
18	A Dream of a Thousand Cats	*Kelley Jones/Malcolm Jones*	*(Aug 1990)*
19	A Midsummer Night's Dream	*Charles Vess*	*(Sep 1990)*
20	Facade	*Colleen Doran/Malcolm Jones*	*(Oct 1990)*
Season of Mists			
21	A Prologue	*Mike Drigenberg/Malcolm Jones*	*(Dec 1990)*
22	Chapter 1	*Mike Drigenberg/Malcolm Jones*	*(Jan 1991)*
23	Chapter 2	*Mike Drigenberg/Malcolm Jones*	*(Feb 1991)*
24	Chapter 3	*Kelley Jones/P. Craig Russell*	*(Mar 1991)*
25	Chapter 4	*Matt Wagner/Malcolm Jones*	*(Apr 1991)*
26	Chapter 5	*Kelley Jones/George Pratt*	*(May 1991)*
27	Chapter 6	*Kelley Jones/Dick Giordano*	*(Jun 1991)*
28	Epilogue	*Mike Drigenberg/George Pratt*	*(Jul 1991)*
Distant Mirrors			
29	Thermidor	*Stan Woch/Dick Giordano*	*(Aug 1991)*
30	August	*Bryan Talbot/Stan Woch*	*(Sep 1991)*
31	Three Septembers and a January	*Shawn McManus*	*(Oct 1991)*
A Game of You			
32	Slaughter on Fifth Avenue	*Shawn McManus*	*(Nov 1991)*
33	Lullabies of Broadway	*Shawn McManus*	*(Dec 1991)*
34	Bad Moon Rising	*Colleen Doran/George Pratt/ Dick Giordano*	*(Jan 1992)*
35	Beginning to See the Light	*Shawn McManus*	*(Feb 1992)*
Sandman Special			
1	The Song of Orpheus	*Bryan Talbot/Mark Buckingham*	*(1991)*

SHADOW OF THE BAT

© Heatwave Editions and DC Comics.

IN THE WAKE OF 'JUDGEMENT ON GOTHAM' AND HOGMANAY, YOU WOULD THINK THAT ALAN GRANT WOULD BE TAKING LIFE A BIT EASIER. NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH, AS HE REVEALS WHAT'S IN STORE FOR 1992 TO COMIC COLLECTOR'S LANCE RICKMAN

CC: *Can we start with Batman as he's the character you're most closely associated with at the moment? It must be getting on for five years since you started on* Detective?

Grant: Yeh, about that. I don't know how many issues it is altogether. I must have done 36 or 40 issues of *Detective* before I switched to *Batman*. Again, I don't know how many issues it is I've done – probably about 20 or 25 issues of *Batman*, and now I'm switching to the new Batman comic scheduled to come out in June to tie in with the new movie.

CC: *No-one has mentioned a new Batman title yet.*

Grant: It's called *Shadow of the Bat*. I'm writing it; Norm Breyfogle is pencilling and inking it. I've only written the first part of the first story so far.

CC: *Is it part of the normal Batman continuity, or like* Legends of the Dark Knight?

Grant: Neither. *Legends* is stories from Batman's past. This is Batman stories from anytime. The plan is that we will be highlighting other characters, not necessarily characters Batman will team up with, but the villains of the piece. As much stories set in Gotham City as Batman stories.

> ...WE PULLED IN MORE PEOPLE FOR OUR SIGNINGS THAN ELTON JOHN OR DAVID BOWIE DID!

CC: *You were keen at one time, in Judge Dredd, on telling stories set in Mega-City. Where Dredd perhaps introduces them and turns up at the end.*

Grant: Well, Batman would fit into that type of thing as well. But in the main Batman title, which is *Batman*, you have to take care of all the continuity, so he consequently has to be in that. *Detective* is a place you can get away with it, so Batman doesn't have to play too large a part.

CC: *Is the format of the new book a series of mini-series or one single storyline running through?*

Grant: I guess it will be a series of mini-series, but having said that I'll have to qualify it. The first story will be a four-parter which is set in Arkham Asylum. After that I'm not sure what happens for the second four issues, but about issue nine we have some somersaults to perform as for the first time the comic wil take note of continuity. In fact we're planning a continuity stint that will take in *Legends, Detective, Batman,* and *Shadow of the Bat*, and it will involve Batman in the biggest shift in his life since his parents got killed, I guess.

CC: *So that's a cross-over in all the Batbooks. D.C. have just issued* Destroyer *which is a cross-over with all three existing books.*

Grant: Yes, but for this one the new continuity will be taking place over all four of the Batbooks, plus there will be a three issue mini-series. Denny O'Neil's writing it and Joe Quesada's drawing it. I really can't go into it and tell you what it is, much as I would like to – I love giving away the end of stories before they appear.

CC: *Norm Breyfogle is doing the art again. You're obviously happy with his work.*

Grant: More than happy. I think that Norm is the definitive Bat-artist of the late 80s/ early 90s. I'm really happy with him.

CC: *Did you like Holy Terror?*

Grant: I did, although to a certain extent I thought that Norm's dynamic style was wasted on it, because too much of it was just stationary stuff. But he did some nice compositions and some nice painting. I prefer to see Norm when he's being more dynamic.

CC: *How do you get on with Denny O'Neil?*

Grant: Denny and I get on fine. He's very good to work with. He probably knows more about Batman and how the character should be rendered in print than anyone else alive. I probably have more respect for him than I've got for any other editor, perhaps other than Archie Goodwin, just because he's been there and he's written everything and edited everything as well. He's a total all-round professional. I like Denny a lot.

JUDGEMENT ON GOTHAM

Grant: It's on sale now! John Wagner and I both bet money that Simon Bisley wouldn't finish it. There you are, Simon. We had no faith! We did think he would miss the deadline, however, he surprised us all and possibly himself. From what I hear it's been a bit of a runaway success. The signing we did at the Virgin Megastore (Marble Arch December 7th 1991) catered for 1,400 people in the course of five hours which is a lot. In fact they said that it was more than David Bowie and Elton John had pulled in for their record promotion signings.

CC: *Was it a combination of Judge Dredd fans and all the Batman fans, if they're different people?*

Grant: I think they're the same people essentially. In this country anyway. In the States they're not because most of them have never heard of Judge Dredd.

CC: *A lot of them have now. Batman fans anyway.*

Grant: The thing about *Judgement on Gotham* is that it wasn't a statement about Judge Dredd. I've said this in interviews previously, so it might be getting a bit old hat, but the first plot that John (Wagner) and I wrote for it was law versus justice and it was definitely slanted that way: very heavy, very philosophically heavy, and when we came to write it, it was so turgid it was obvious to us that there was an ingredient missing, and that ingredient was humour. There was no humour in it. Although Batman himself isn't a humorous character, the villains in his strip are often humorous and there's often jokes in the Batman story. So we just jumped the first plot and came up with another one.

'I think that humour was the right road to travel.'

'Judgement on Gotham – courtesy of Grant, Wagner and Bisley'.

'To be able to write Robin, I had to turn him into a character I liked.

CC: *There's a bit of black humour at the end, where Anderson's persuading Dredd not to take Batman back for jaywalking, or whatever. The humour in Dredd is that he's so single minded.*

Grant: I think that humour was the right road to travel.

CC: *Do you like stories outside of the normal continuity?*

Grant: Oh, yes. I am not normally a continuity freak, but because I work on several monthly titles I have to be involved in it. I think the best stories I write are outside the continuity, but having said that, the readers demand it, and with a character like Batman who's been going for 50 years you've got to have some sort of continuity, because if you allow it to degenerate into chaos the whole thing would fall to pieces.

I think Denny O'Neil has done an incredible job in holding Batman together over the past four or five years. Batman has appeared as a guest star in so many other comics and has been in so many books and publications, and Denny has still managed to preserve his integrity in the majority of cases, if not quite in all of them.

CC: *You've introduced some new Batman villains. Who are your favourites – old and new?*

Grant: Favourite traditional one, I guess, must be the Penguin, and to a lesser extent the Joker, although I've only written one Joker story. There is another one coming up, a story John Wagner and I are doing for this year's *Detective Annual*. John and I are also doing the *Robin Annual* and the *Batman Annual*, so while each one will stand up individually they're connected. The Joker plays a large part in the first one, which is *Detective*, but in the *Robin Annual* he doesn't feature at all, and then in the *Batman Annual* the Joker will be back again. So by the time that's finished I'll have written quite a lot of Joker.

My favourite of those I've created, or John and I have created, is Cornelius Stark because the guy's madness is so logical. He could almost talk me into going out and cutting out people's hearts and eating them for the beneficial health of things. And the Ventriloquist and Scarface. There's the three part Scarface cross-over coming up between Batman and Detective, and there's a possibility that John and I will be doing a Scarface mini-series some time this year. It's been talked about, but we've not done any work on it.

CC: *I think he strikes a chord with the traditional Batman fan, slightly twisted, over the top . . .*

Grant: And could never exist in real life. I mean, anyone who walked around like the Penguin would have the sh*t beaten out of them; anyone who carried around a dummy who told people to do things wouldn't last five minutes, but he fits into Batman very well I think. That *Detective Annual* I was talking about features a rather unusual team-up between the Joker and Scarface which is a way to establish Scarface as being one of the pantheon of Batman villains.

CC: *They'll probably get on quite well.*

Grant: Well, not really. The Ventriloquist doesn't want to work with the Joker because he thinks the Joker is insane, but Scarface finds out . . .

ROBIN

CC: *I enjoyed the lead up to Robin's first mini-series because the new Robin is so much better; the character so much more believable and more interesting than the previous Robin. You actually seem perfectly happy not to feature him in Batman at all. Is that editorial direction? Can he not appear because he's off in his own mini-series?*

Four-part 'Rite of Passage' story line introduced Tim Drake as the new Robin.

Grant: I don't like Robin all that much, and the only reason Robin has been featured at all is because Denny O'Neil wanted him back in the continuity, and that may have been because the movie people wanted Robin in one of the future movies. I don't think he's going to be in *Batman Returns*, but he may be in the next one.

To be able to write Robin, I had to turn him into a character I liked. I couldn't have written Jason Todd, but the way that I wrote Tim Drake I quite liked him. Denny O'Neil's the one to thank because although I wrote it, Denny said play him this way, and put him into that story. He gave me a lot of help on it.

Batman doesn't need Robin, although I can appreciate from the fans' point of view it can be very good to see the two of them working together. Robin's got fans of his own. It's a lighter side of things, it allows you to see things from a younger, less cynical, less mature perspective. Totally unexpectedly I've grown to quite like Robin.

The mini-series did really well. I only wish I had written it.

CC: *Batman's identity is about to be revealed to Vicki Vale. Why now, and will this be permanent?*

Grant: By the time you're reading this, it will be apparent. He does not reveal his identity to Vicki Vale, although he comes very close to it. We run through an imaginary sequence where he does do it. A sort of a 'What If . . .', but something that happens later in the story shows him just how dangerous it could be, and he doesn't do it.

This may sound terribly cynical, but that three issue story is the issue in which Vicki

SHADOW OF THE BAT

CONTINUED

Vale is written out of the continuity for quite a while – she's not in the second movie, so why put her in the comic? Now that's not my thinking. Personally I can live without her quite happily.

CC: ***She was never a major character in the comics for years and years before the movie, and she only reappared because of Kim Bassinger. I noticed she was in hospital. I was expecting Batman to reveal his identity and she just dies of shock.***

Grant: It occurred to me, but I was told I couldn't.

CC: ***Just in case Kim does sign up for the third one!***

The Legion series began in 1989 as Legion 89. The title changes with the year.

LEGION

CC: ***How did your work on Legion '89 come about? Presumably there was a Legion revamp coming up at the time.***

Grant: It was Keith Giffen's baby really, and I came into it very late on. It was Keith's idea to do the Legion revamp and spin it off from the *Alien Invasion* series that was being done that year; I didn't have anything to do with it at that point.

It just so happened that I'd done an interview with *Speakeasy* where I had said something rude – or something that was construed to be rude – by the managing director of Fleetway who fired me.

So I called Karen Berger, and said, 'Karen I've just been fired and I'm desperate for work. What have you got? She said, 'Give me a couple of days' and she phoned back and said, 'I don't suppose you'd consider doing the dialogue on somebody else's story, would you?' I said, 'Yes, of course, I'll do anything at all. I've got bills to pay and I've not got any income.' That's how I got onto Legion.

By that time the Alien Invasion stories had already been plotted out so they sent me the plot so I could see how the characters were used in it. Keith had plotted out the first 12 issues very sketchily, so he knew approximately where we were going. I don't think anybody at the time knew that Lobo was going to be such a runaway success.

CC: ***He'd been around in the D.C. Universe for some years.***

Grant: Yes, he'd been around for a while. He was fairly popular, but he wasn't anything great. All I can think of is that it was a combination of Barry's (Kitson)

'As far as classical superhero artists go, very few of them can touch Barry Kitson.'

artwork – the way Barry made him look – and the more humourous side that was given to him. Maybe I'm wrong.

CC: ***It's the anarchic streak, and the look. And squabbling supergroups seem popular.***

Grant: Sometimes I think that we took it too far. When you're co-plotting most of these, and when you're co-plotting with someone, or when you're working with anyone else, you're very conscious that you can't spend a day working and come out of it with nothing. Two people have spent a working day and haven't earned anything. If you're working on your own you take responsibility for yourself, but when you're working with somebody else you're partly responsible for that other person and they're partly responsible for you.

Barry lives 60 miles away so if he was driving down here and back it was like a three hour journey – we had to get something written, so sometimes we weren't going into it as deeply as we might have if we were writing on our own. Now I'm off *Legion* as of issue 39, and Barry is taking over on his own and he can go with his own ideas and not have to compromise. More power to his elbow.

I think he's a very under-rated artist in the D.C. Universe. In my opinion, as far as classical superhero artists go very few of them can touch Barry, I know that fan reaction is not logical – the best artist is not always treated as the best artist – but I would say that Barry's artwork is as good as Jim Lee's; Barry could have drawn the X-Men and you wouldn't have known.

CC: ***Certainly his story-telling is a lot clearer and better than a lot of people drawing the X-Men.***

Grant: Hopefully after three years of co-plotting with me he'll have learned a lot of lessons, a lot of tricks, a lot of short cuts.

Lobo first appeared in Omega Men 3.

OUTCASTS

CC: Outcasts ***was the first series you worked on for DC. Dit it sell well?***

Grant: It didn't sell that well. The first issue sold about 90,000 but by the time we reached issue 12 sales were about 25,000. It was still profitable, as the break-even point on it hadn't been reached.

It was direct sales only. I may be wrong in thinking this, but I don't think America was ready for a story like Outcasts when it came out. I'm not saying there was anything terribly radical about it, but in American terms it was a very unusual superhero story. Now, four or five years later, when there are lots of unusual superhero stories Outcasts would fit right in. But at that time the black humour of it didn't gel with American comic fans.

CC: ***Are you trying to say it's time to bring them back?***

Grant: No I wasn't saying that, although I do think that's a good idea. Someone at D.C. suggested that to me a while ago. We've been getting royalty payments – they've sold the *Outcasts* to Italy so we've been getting some small royalty cheques from that. But John and I are thinking of doing a new novel mini-series and we are considering bringing back two of the guys from the *Outcast*: B.D. Rickenbacker and Yancy Queeg, the guy in the bucket. We're thinking of bringing them back and teaming them up with Lobo, and then at the end of the story Lobo will obviously go his own way into functioning parts of the D.C. Universe.

LOBO

There's a whole lot of Lobo stuff coming up this year. Simon Bisley's working on

Lobo: the Last Czarnian. 'Simon's committed to doing one Lobo a month for the next year . . . this is going to contribute to the Lobo overkill in '92.

the first issue of a new four-part mini-series. it's called *Lobo's Back*, because on the cover of the first one, he's done Lobo in a leather jacket with the studs on it.

Simon's committed to doing one Lobo every month for the next year, so there's going to be three four-issue mini-series', and at the same time – this is going to contribute to the Lobo overkill in '92 – I'm doing a three issue prestige format Lobo with Sam Keith as the artist, and Steve Oliff doing the colours. I've done the first issue of that which Sam is working on. I'm also doing a Lobo–Demon team up story where the two of them are likely to go to Hell in search of Harry the Fiddleman's soul but I've not started writing that and the artist will be Val Semeiks.

John Wagner and I are writing a Lobo mini-series which again hasn't been started yet – this is the one that may be featuring the return of B.D. Rickenbacker and Yancy Queeg, and the mooted artist for that is Colin Macneil.

I think that's about all of Lobo.

PSYCHONAUTS AND DR. STRANGE

Grant: Tony Luke and I co-wrote a four-issue prestige format story called *Psychonauts* which is 4 issues of 46 pages. it's being drawn by a Japanese studio. We wrote it between 1990 and '91 but there's been a hold up with the art, because the guy doing the art had a runaway hit in Japan with a Gulf War comic, so he was taken off *Psychonauts* and did a follow up to that. Anyway, he's now working on the third issue, so that will be issued this year by Epic in the States, in colour, but it's also being released simultaneously in Japan, but the Japanese edition will be released in black and white.

John Wagner and I have got a proposal in with Marvel just now with Simon Bisley as the artist which is for a 64 page Dr. Strange graphic novel. However, that's been with Marvel for a couple of months. It's just a 'proposal' at the moment, but it was written because Marvel suggested that we write the proposal – they wanted us to do something for them. We'll see what happens with it.

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Alan Grant's first work on The Demon appeared in Action Comics 636.

FLEETWAY

CC: *There's a new series which is a chronological reprinting of Dredd which started in January. When did you first write Dredd?*

Grant: I don't know anything about it because that's not the sort of thing they tell us about. The very first Dredd I wrote myself appeared in the 1981 *2000AD Annual*, drawn by Brett Ewins, but the first Dredd that John and I worked on together was an instalment of the Judge Child saga, drawn by Mike McMahon, and

'They send me Vali's pencils every month and I would call them beautiful.'

DEMON

Grant: I'm not actually sure what's going to be happening to Demon in the course of the coming year. To make things clear to your readers, because of health problems my doctor told me I had to cut back my workload by 50 per cent, so I resigned from *Legion* and *Demon*. Barry Kitson has taken over on Legion but they haven't been able to find anyone to take over from me on Demon, so I had planned on giving up with issue 25, consequently I've not got it any further than 25. I'm thinking I may do some sort of quest for the Eternity Book, something like that, but I don't know. If anybody wants to be a Demon writer, now's the time.

Guests in forthcoming issues: in issues 23 and 24 the special guest star is the guy we were talking about – Robin. Robin meets Etrigan for the first time, and that's quite an amusing little meeting. It's called *The Return of the Howler* and features a character that Jack Kirby first used in his run of *The Demon* back in the 70s. Well, for anybody whose been wondering where the Howler has been for the last 15 or 16 years . . .

Actually he's a were wolf by any other name, although I've changed him slightly. In issue 23 we meet the Howler again and we find out how he became the Howler, but in the second part we find something has gone wrong and there are about 40 or 50 other Howlers that have collected over the last 15 years and they're all living in this abandoned factory outside Gotham. OK?

He's back and he's Howling!

HOWL!

SHADOW OF THE BAT

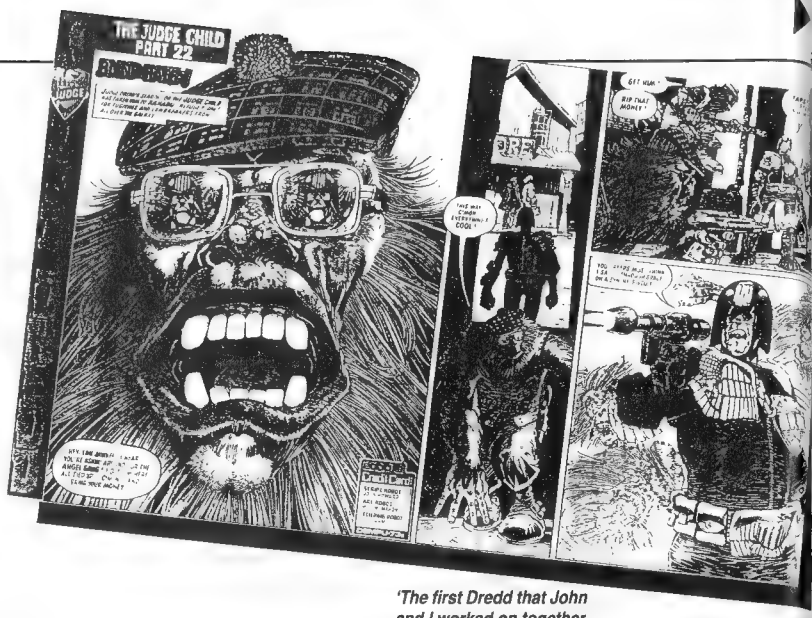
CONTINUED

featured Fink Angel, Mean Machine Angel and an ape that was wearing a tartan bonnet.

That was the very first one we did together, although we had worked on Judge Dredd stuff previously. John and I were sharing a house at the time and if he was writing a Dredd story, when he'd spent half an hour on it or an hour, he'd go over it with me just to get some feedback and see how it was and any suggestions I made might be taken into account or not as the case may be. That was how I started on it. I had a previous successful career as a writer, but not as a comic writer. I was a prose writer.

CC: ***I notice on* Judgement on Gotham *there are creator credits: 'Judge Dredd created by John Wagner and Carlos Ezquerra' which I've never seen before.***

Grant: Fleetway have now come to some sort of arrangement whereby they accept that John and Carlos are the creators, and I believe they get some sort of payment as creators, although as a modern Dredd creator myself I don't know about that.



'The first Dredd that John and I worked on together was an instalment of the Judge Child saga.'

'The first Bogie Man mini series has been finished by the BBC.'

I'm still working for the *Judge Dredd Megazine* which goes fortnightly rather than monthly in May. The page count goes down from 48 to 40, and the price goes down from £1.65 to a quid. I hope it's going to be successful.

I've got a thing starting off in the new *Megazine* with Carlos Ezquerra called 'Armageddon'. It's going to take about 200 pages to tell it, and I've only written the first 48 which is the first book. It will take us right from 1955 up to whenever it was the Judge system was founded 2056, or 2060 whenever, it will fill in all the holes that readers have always wondered about: how the Judge system came about, for instance.

CC: ***How the Soviet Union got back together again to form the SovBlock?***

Grant: You can't have it all!

CC: ***What will be happening to Judge Anderson?***

Grant: I'm going to be doing a major Judge Anderson for the *Megazine*, not for *2000AD*. It'll either be seven parts of nine pages each or double that because that's handy for novelisation lengths.

I've got a basic idea for a story, but I've not been able to devote any time to figuring anything out in detail yet. I wouldn't be surprised if at some point in the next year or so *2000AD* was actually merged into the *Judge Dredd Megazine*. I don't know the ins and outs of it, but it wouldn't surprise me.

CC: ***I feel the quality of the artwork in 2000AD dropped when it went all colour.***

Grant: It's partially because people employed as colourists suddenly found they were being employed as artists, many of them couldn't and still can't draw. That had something to do with the deterioration of quality, but – maybe you wouldn't agree with this – from my point of view as a reader I'd say the story quality has suffered severely with the revamped versions of old characters, like Robo-Hunter for instance. I consider that to be an abortion. It's a disgrace. it makes me feel ashamed that somebody should write a character I had such a long association with and do it so badly, and do it without any feeling for what the character was. There's no charm, there's no humour – the guy who's writing it doesn't have a clue what Robo-Hunter is about. Characters have a feel to them and if you can't get that feel then you've no business writing it. No business whatsoever.

THE DREDD MOVIE

Grant: Most of what I know about the Dredd movie was gleaned from an article in *Time Out!* John did get a phone call from someone involved asking if we'd have a go at it – a script proposal – and we will be starting next week.

CC: ***Apparently the first draft tried to cram everything in, Fatties, the Angel Gang, every character from Judge Dredd, and there were so many sub-plots and cameos it was a mess.***

Grant: John and I have spent some time thinking about it, and it's hard to come up with the definitive angle to approach it. If you look at, say, *Bladerunner*, the sets were fantastic. That could have been Mega-City One. If you look at *Robo-Cop, Robo-Cop* is really in a way what Judge Dredd would have been if a Judge Dredd movie had been made five years ago.

Look at the Schwarzenegger movies where he plays the part of a heavy guy who guns people down, all that sort of ultra-violent stuff which Dredd was once known for. We need to find something different or a different way of presenting them, so that people are going to say, 'Yes that looks good' and it's still got the integrity, the essence of Judge Dredd.

CC: ***It's got to have the humour. He's got to be the butt of jokes.***

BOGIE MAN

CC: ***The second story ended in* Toxic *prematurely.***

Grant: It was a 112 page story, but Cam Kennedy was only able to do 56 and he won't be able to finish it. So John and I are re-writing the stuff that Cam has already drawn and it will be re-illustrated by Robin Smith in black and white. Tundra will be putting this out in four 24-page comics, following it up with a graphic novel afterwards.

Part of the reason we're doing this is because Cam is so busy he can't finish it,

SHADOW OF THE BAT

CONTINUED

and also the first Bogie Man mini-series has been finished by the BBC. They've shot it on film, rather than on video tape, and they're releasing it at the Edinburgh Film Festival and at various art theatres. They're seeking American backing because there's interest in doing a 13 part series, but they need American money to do it. The first 50 minute Bogie Man special has got to be sold to America. I've been told that P.B.S. have already offered for it, but the B.B.C. have got to hold back because they're trying to sell to one of the networks. P.B.S. only gets six to ten million viewers, whereas a network can get 120 million viewers.

Robbie Coltrane plays the Bogie Man, and Fiona Fullerton, an ex-Bond girl, plays Dr. Olive Branch. Midge Ure plays Mr. McKirby, and Craig Ferguson's in it. So there are some fairly well known names.

Robbie Coltrane hasn't really broken in the States the way that Billy Connolly has, but he's on the verge. He's got a couple of movies out in the States that are not widely known, but have cult followings, Nuns on the Run and The Pope Must Die. If the Bogie Man is the thing that breaks him, we have got to have more Bogie Man because it doesn't matter how successful the B.B.C. film is, we won't get any more money than they've already paid us.

We've got to have what they call Bogie Man product available so we can take advantage of all the publicity, otherwise I don't know who makes money out of it.

CC: ***The Americans seem to like Scottish humour as long as they understand it.***

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Grant: As with the first series we'll be putting in a glossary at the back. You can't do that on a TV series.

ARTISTS AND OTHERS

CC: ***Which artists do you like working with, and who would you like to work with?***

Grant: I like most of the artists I have worked with, or who I continue to work with. I enjoy working with Barry Kitson, Norm Breyfogle, Val Semeiks. It has been my contention that Val's pencils have not been well served by the inkers that he's had so far. They send me his pencils every month and they are what I would call beautiful, but by the time you see them inked . . .

Funnily enough the artists that I work with, I become friends with, like I'm friendly with Norm Breyfogle, and we stay at each other's place and meet up at conventions. We tend to take time out to go and see each other. I'm very friendly with Carlos Ezquerra and I've been to Spain several times to stay with him.

Other artists I like: David Roach – I'm a big fan of David's work. I think he is criminally under-rated, and I would say that was mainly down to bad personal feeling against him by certain people without mentioning any names.

CC: ***Most of the artists you mention are pretty distinctive, they're all individualistic and they don't adopt a particular house style.***

Grant: I don't think they need to. I really like working with Simon Bisley and Sam Keith as well, although I've only done one story with Sam. The Lobo project is the culmination of three years of us trying to get something else together. There have been several false starts.

Sam lacks self-confidence. Consider Norm Breyfogle – Norm is a good artist and he knows he's a good artist. I'm not saying he's big-headed or arrogant about it, but he knows he's a good artist. Carlos knows he's a good artist. Sam doesn't know he's a good artist, you've got to keep telling him. He'll call me up and say, 'I've just seen *Judgement on Gotham*, I've got to retire. There's no way I can draw as well as that. The answer as far as I'm concerned is that as long as he keeps doing what he's good at, he's doing as well as anyone. He really needs a lot of geeing up. Some artists are like that. Others tend to swagger a bit.

CC: ***What about the artists you'd like to work with or admire?***

Grant: Off the top of my head I can't think of many. Kelley Jones maybe. He and Sam Keith are keen to do something with me for D.C., some sort of Batman project, but the three of us have got other things to get out of the way before we do it. I'll be writing it, Sam pencilling and Kelley inking, either that or Sam and Kelley taking it in turns to tell parts of the story.

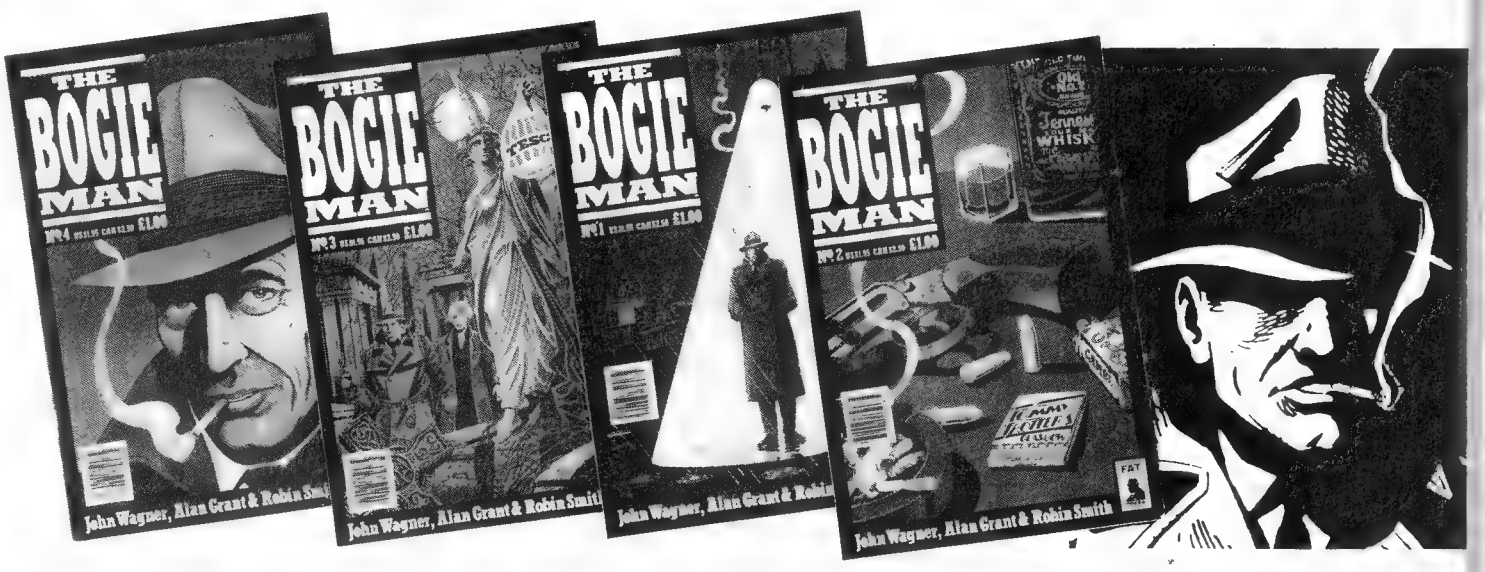
'I WOULDN'T BE SUPRISED IF AT SOME POINT IN THE NEXT YEAR OR SO - 2000 AD WAS MERGED INTO JUDGE DREDD

CC: *Are there any writers whose work you admire?*

Grant: I like Peter David's writing for Marvel. I like what he's done for *The Hulk*, and *X-Force*. My favourite comic writer has still got to be Frank Miller for the Daredevil stuff he did with Bill Sienkiewicz and his Batman stuff. First equal with Alan Moore.

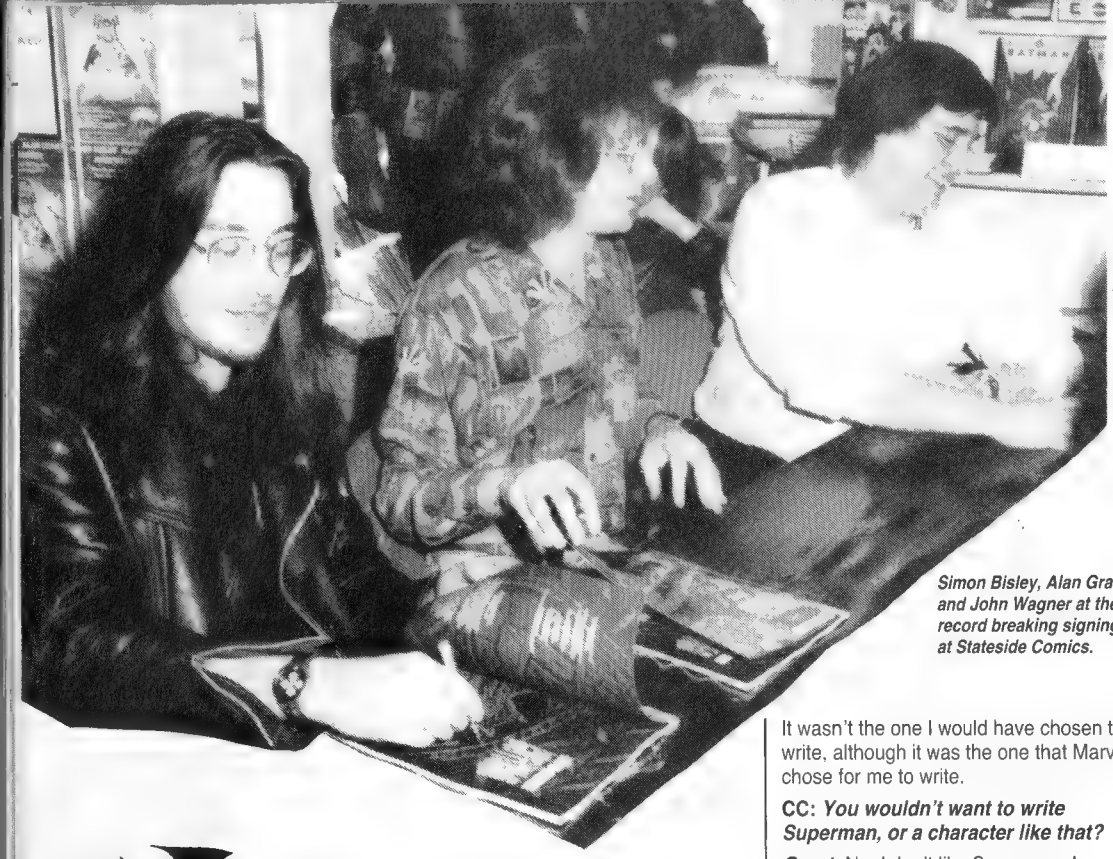
I'm also quite a fan of John Wagner's writing, not just because I've worked with him for so long, although I guess that has something to do with it. Our personalities must be somehow similar because we find we work best together on either adventure stories or humour stories, or a mixture of the two. When we try to write something serious it becomes more difficult: you've far too many compromises to make. Serious stories demand you become personal about them, and you can't do that when there's two of you.

Pat Mills I admire, although I don't admire a lot of what he writes. But the way – and John Wagner's the same in this respect – he can spawn new characters, new ideas, new stories. They make it seem effortless – and having been doing it for 15 years I know it's anything but effortless. If you look at what the younger comic writers have done, none of them have really created any characters,



Grant: We're trying not to go over the top, but at the same time we don't want to alienate the Bogie Man's basic audience, which is a Scottish audience. John, Robin and I have talked over the idea. I don't know if you're familiar with the D.C. Thomson publication *The Broons* which they publish each week in a sunday paper, and then collect them on alternate years into a collected edition, alternating with *Oor Wullie*. Well, we want to do a Bogie Man annual so that every year all five million people in Scotland will know there's a *Bogie Man Annual* available, and hopefully one per cent of them will go out and buy it!

CC: ***The only problem is that it's all written in dialect. The best way to understand it is to read it out loud.***



(Photo by Steve Cook)

Simon Bisley, Alan Grant and John Wagner at the record breaking signing at Stateside Comics.

SHADOW OF THE BAT

CONTINUED

except maybe Grant Morrison's Zenith which I would say has run its course. The joke was stale a long time ago.

But none of them have created any character that has been worth bringing back for a second series or even looking at twice. There's no power, no force to their characters. Maybe that's just a reflection of the way the world's going, because if I watch a programme like Top of the Pops there are bands on there that I've never heard of before and I never will hear of again. They're there for that one hit and then, presumably, they retire to Clacton where they spend the rest of their lives trying to recreate that one hit. There doesn't seem to be many people who have the endurance to keep bringing out good strong new material.

CC: *Surely a lot of it is down to experience and hard work. Sitting down at a desk for eight or nine hours a day.*

Grant: I don't know the way Pat works, but I would say the typing – the actual writing – is the easy part. The hard part is all the time you spend walking up and down, or sitting thinking, or banging your head against the wall. Pat can still bring more to it than your average person, and it's not just because he works hard. He's got some sort of natural talent for it. Or un-natural talent.

CC: *Are there any characters you'd like to write?*

Grant: I'd like to write Dr. Strange, because he's always been one of my favourite characters. I'd also like to write another Silver Surfer story, but I'd like to do it properly. I didn't like the way the other story I wrote [*Silver Surfer 39*] came out. It wasn't the one I would have chosen to write, although it was the one that Marvel chose for me to write.

CC: *You wouldn't want to write Superman, or a character like that?*

Grant: No, I don't like Superman. I wouldn't want to write Superman ever. I'm not really a big superhero freak. I'd quite like to write some Huntress stuff. Basically she's a female Batman, but I figure I could do it interestingly.

I want to bring back a couple of older characters. I've been wanting to team up Etrigan and Blue Devil for instance, but Dan Raspler, the editor of *Demon*, wasn't very happy about it. He doesn't like Blue Devil. I'd also like to do a story about Tweedledum and Tweedledee, but I haven't been able to figure a story. However, I've done a Bat-Mite story which Kevin O'Neill was supposed to be illustrating for *Legends of the Dark Knight.*

NEW PROJECTS

Grant: Tundra have *Dominator* which is written by myself. The models and photographs are by Tony Luke and the painted art is by Simon Bisley.

CC: *The Tony Luke who had a couple of photostrips in 2000AD?*

Grant: This stuff doesn't look like a photostrip. It's taking advantage of the latest printing technology, and Simon is going to be painting on top of Tony's black and white photographs. The story is about a heavy metal band who inadvertently bring a demon from hell. Tony's done something like this before, or used the character of Dominator before, but it never got anywhere so we've revamped it. It should be out sometime this year.

Tundra have also asked me if I'll do something with David Roach for them, a new character in a graphic novel. It's a shame in a way, because I'd like to see David continue with Anderson because I think he does such a good job, but at the same time David is a very slow, painstaking artist and can't make a living out of Judge Anderson: he needs to own a character so that if we manage to sell it abroad he would get the money rather than the publisher – and David's style of artwork is very popular in Europe so we ought to be able to sell it.

I'm also doing another one for Tundra, another creator owned project called *The Maze World* series, which Arthur Ranson and I have worked out together. I guess you would call it sword and sorcery, although it's not quite sword and sorcery. I think it's a sign of *2000AD*'s short-sightedness because we originally approached them to see if they were interested and I got no come-back, no enthusiasm or feedback from them whatsoever.

It should be something quite spectacular. I've seen Arthur's sketches, but I've not started writing it yet. We've got this fantastic world, but we can't find the rationale for it. We'll be working on that in the near future.

CC: *Is that a comic or graphic novels?*

Grant: Definitely graphic novels. The David Roach thing will also be a graphic novel, because they're acceptable on the continent. I wouldn't see it selling that much in America because David's style isn't suited to what generally sells.

They've been trying to fix up Judge Dredd for various other cross-overs, so John and I did a proposal for a Dredd–Wolverine cross-over, but I believe Marvel aren't interested. There was also a suggestion with Dark Horse for a Dredd–Aliens, but I've not heard anything.

CC: *Relationships seem to have thawed between Marvel and D.C. with the re-publication of all their cross-over material.*

Grant: There was talk some years ago of Norm Breyfogle and myself doing a Batman–Wolverine cross-over, but it all got lost in inter-company squabbling. I don't think that cross-company tie-ins are all that important. I can see why people make them such a big deal. I don't think people who buy Batman, want Judge Dredd in their continuity. After they've seen him they say 'he's a pretty unpleasant fellow, I'll be glad to see the back of him!' They just never seem to sit well together.

I was looking at my schedule upstairs and I have about a dozen ideas for stories, some of which I've started off, and some of which are just a paragraph in a notebook somewhere. But that's all sort of back-up stuff should anything that I'm working on fall through. None of it's definite.

Sam Keith and I have talked about doing a creator owned character together. There are another couple of stories written about the cowboy character that Simon Bisley and I came up with for the first issue of *Toxic!* There's a possibility that Tundra will be publishing him. There's also the possibility of Simon and I doing the character as a graphic novel.

CC: *Anything else?*

Grant: No. My wife Sue went to great lengths to insist that I did not say anything outrageous, that I did not discuss my drug habits with you and did not run down any other writer and artist.

CC: *This has been a remarkably clean interview. Thank you.*

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Q I recently picked up a magazine called *Aliens* in my local newsagents. Can you tell me anything about this title?

John Robertson, Scunthorpe

A Given you bought this at your newsagents, I must assume that it's published by Trident, a UK-based company. If so, it's a reprint of material originally published by Dark Horse, an independent American company.

Dark Horse publish many of their titles as mini-series – complete, self-contained stories within a limited number of issues. They began publishing comics based on the Aliens movie back in 1988.

The first series, a sequel to the second movie, was called, unsurprisingly, *Aliens* and was followed by *Aliens II, Aliens: Earth War* (with art by Sam Keith and covers by John Bolton) and, currently, *Aliens: Genocide* (with covers by Arthur Suydam).

Aliens: Genocide will be followed by *Aliens: Hive*. Also imminent is *Aliens: Tribes*, a hardcover volume containing a prose story with 24 full colour illustrations.

As Dark Horse also have the rights to publish comics based on the Predator movie, they have also produced a series featuring the ultimate grudge match: *Aliens vs Predator!*

On the subject of *Predator*, Dark Horse have published three series. The first, a sequel to the first movie, was called . . . *Predator!* This was followed by *Predator: Big Game* and *Predator: Cold War*. Due shortly is *Predator: Bloody Sands of Time*. They also published the comic adaptation of the Predator 2 movie.

One interesting *Predator* offshoot has been *Batman vs Predator*, a recent co-production between Dark Horse and DC Comics. A full colour, three issue mini-series, it's written by Dave Gibbons with art by Andy and Adam Kubert (Joe Kubert's sons) and covers by Arthur Suydam.

Incidentally, Dark Horse also have the rights to publish comics based on Terminator (the first movie). To date, they have produced four series: *Terminator*, *Terminator: Secondary Objectives* (with art and covers by Paul Gulacy); and, currently, *Terminator: The Enemy Within* (with Simon Bisley covers). In the near future look for *Terminator: Hunters and Killers*.

There's also been a one-shot titled . . . *Terminator: One Shot!* This featured art by Matt Wagner and, as an extra added bonus, a pop-up centrefold!

Dark Horse will shortly be losing the rights to Terminator but will be gaining the rights to Robocop. To start the latter off (and to finish the former), they will be publishing *The Terminator/Robocop Wars*. This will be written by Frank Miller (he of *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* and many other comic classics as well as writer on both the second and third Robocop movies), drawn by Walt Simonson and is likely to appear before the end of the year.

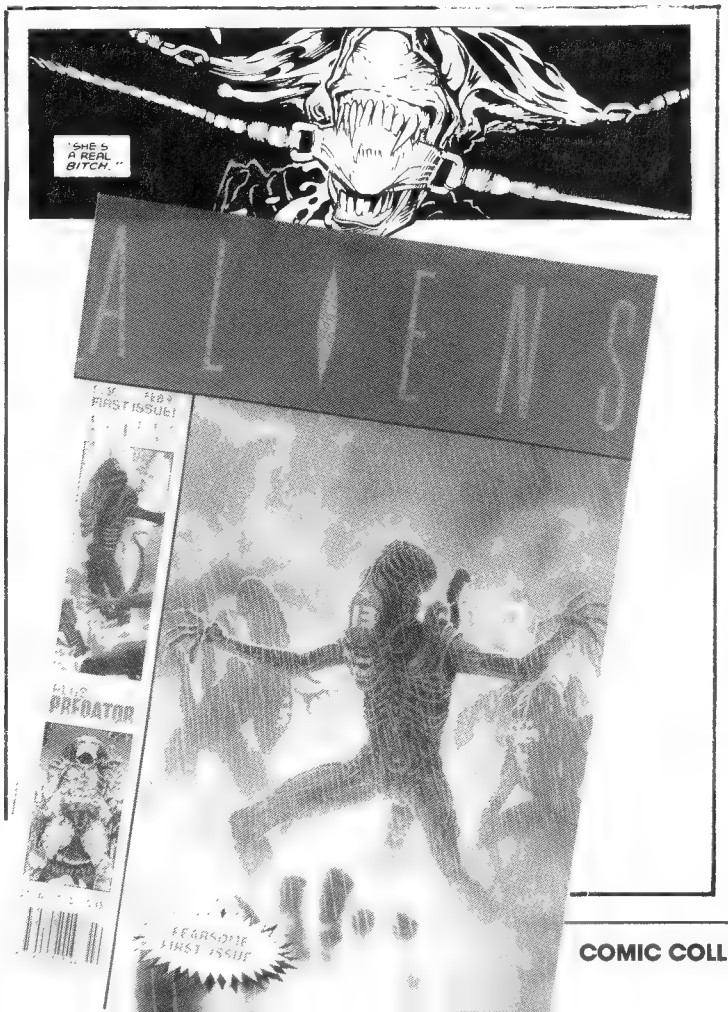
All the above are in colour apart from the first *Aliens* series. They are also all four issues long apart from that first *Aliens* series (which was six issues), the adaptation of the Predator 2 movie (two issues) and, of course, *Terminator: One Shot*. *Aliens vs Predator* also had an issue 'O' which reprinted the black and white stories from *Dark Horse Presents* (an ongoing anthology title). This was a prelude to the actual series.

Unfortunately, unless you have a comic shop near you, the only way you will be able to read these stories is through the Trident reprints of *Aliens* (which also includes *Predator*) and *Terminator*, although Titan, another UK publisher, have issued some of the series as trade paperbacks. Check your local bookshop – you might be able to pick up their editions of *Aliens, Aliens II, Aliens: Earth War, Aliens vs Predator, Predator* and *Terminator: Tempest* (the title given to the collected first series).

Dark Horse collect (or intend to collect) all these series, except probably *Predator 2* and *Terminator: One Shot* into trade paperbacks. It's conceivable that Titan will publish their own editions of the newer series at some time in the future.

Finally, Dark Horse have published hardcover collections of *Aliens, Aliens II* and *Predator*. Similar collections of *Aliens: Earth War* and *Terminator: Tempest* are due any day now, as is the *Compleat Aliens* which will collect almost every *Aliens* story including those published in *Dark Horse Presents* and *Dark Horse Insider* (a monthly newsletter).

All these hardcover collections are limited editions of only 2,500 copies (except *the Compleat Aliens* – only 1,000 copies) and are signed by the relevant writers and artists.



Q I recently picked up a copy of the *Watchmen* trade paperback and would like to know what else artist Dave Gibbons has worked on.

Ian Sinclair, Cardiff

A Dave's first comic work was published in 1971 when he began drawing for fanzines including *Fantasy Advertiser* for which he produced 'Quest AD2130'. At the same

ENQUIRY DESK

CONTINUED

time he was also providing art for underground comix such as *Rock 'n' Roll Madness Funnies*, *The Trials of Nasty Tales* and *Zip Comics*.

From there he went on to work on *Powerman* (a Nigerian comic featuring a super-powered character with no relation to Marvel's Luke Cage).

Following on from these early beginnings he moved on to *Wizard* where he drew a variety of stories which appeared in issues dated between July 20 1974 and December 24 1977.

Then came *2000AD*, launched on February 26 1977. *2000AD* was (and still is) instrumental in introducing many writers and artists to the American market (particularly Marvel & DC). Apart from Dave, it has helped open America up to (among many others) Simon Bisley, Brian Bolland, Alan Davis, Alan Grant, Alan Moore, Grant Morrison and Kevin O'Neill.

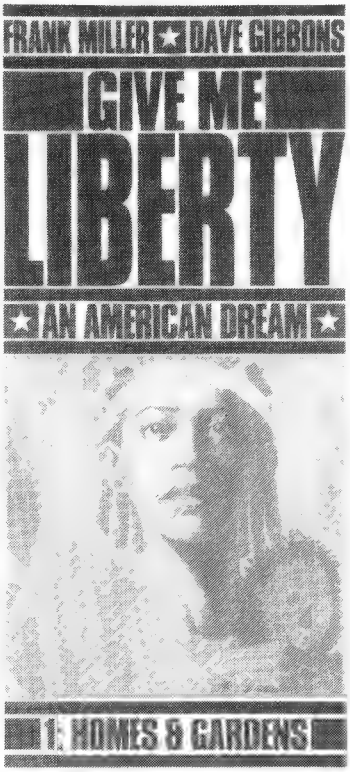
Dave's artwork on *2000AD* appeared in well over one hundred issues starting with the very first. He worked on such series as Harlem Heroes, Dan Dare, Ro-Busters and Rogue Trooper (which he co-created with Gerry Finley-Day). He also drew a number of short stories (some of which were written by Alan Moore) under the series title, Time Twisters.

Although Dave left *2000AD* in 1979, he has returned to the title twice, firstly with artwork for the 500th issue and, secondly, in 1989, to write rather than draw Rogue Trooper.

From *2000AD*, Dave went on to the *Doctor Who Weekly*, a new title from Marvel's UK division. As with *2000AD*, he was there from the very first issue. For *Doctor Who*, he drew stories featuring the BBC's most famous Doctor in over 60 issues. Some of these were reprinted, by Marvel US, in *Marvel Premiere* numbers 57–60 with a further story being reprinted, also by Marvel US, in *Starlord: The Special Edition.*

By 1982, America was beckoning in the form of DC Comics. For them he has drawn *Brave & Bold 200*, 'The Creeper' in *Flash* numbers 318 and 319; *DC Challenge 5*, *Green Lantern* issues 161, 162, 164–167, 172–176, 178–183, 185, 186 and 188 (a *Tales of the Green Lantern Corps, a back-up story written by Alan Moore), Legion of Super-Heroes Annual 2, Omega Men 3* and *Superman Annual 11* (also written by Alan Moore).

For Marvel, he drew a Doctor Strange story, written by Walt Simonson, which was published in *Marvel Fanfare 41*. He also illustrated the Harvey Kurtzman story, 'The Super Surfer', which



appeared in the *Harvey Kurtzman's Strange Adventures* graphic novel (published by Marvel under their Epic imprint).

Then, in 1986, Dave once more got together with writer Alan Moore to create *Watchmen*. This series, together with Frank Miller's *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, was to give comics some mainstream credibility and acceptance by the general public. It was also a winner of several awards (including a Hugo, the first comic to win this prestigious science fiction award) and made 'superstars' of both Dave and Alan.

Since *Watchmen*, Dave has concentrated on writing, although he did draw the *Give Me Liberty* mini-series (published by Dark Horse Comics) which was written by Frank Miller. As a writer, Dave has authored the *World's Finest* mini-series (for DC) and the current *Batman vs Predator* mini-series (a DC/Dark Horse co-production).

Although the titles mentioned above cover the major parts of his career, Dave has also drawn for the following British titles: *A1 1* (published by Atomeka Press)- *Brickman 1* (Harrier)- *Heartbreak Hotel 1* (Willyprods); *House of Hammer 7*, 15 (reprint) and 23 (Quality); *Hulk Comic 1* (Marvel UK); *Outrageous Tales from the Old Testament* graphic novel (Knockabout); *Seven Deadly Sins* graphic novel (Knockabout); *Starlord* (IPC) May 27 1978 and *Warrior 1* 6 (reprint) (Quality).

For more of Dave's artwork, look out for his adaptation of the Ray Bradbury short story, 'Boys, You Too Can Grow Mushrooms in Your Cellar'. This will appear in the *Ray Bradbury Treasury* to be published by Byron Press. He has also drawn a 'Mister Monster' story to be published by Tundra.

Finally, Dave is currently writing a *Superman* story to be illustrated by Simon Bisley.

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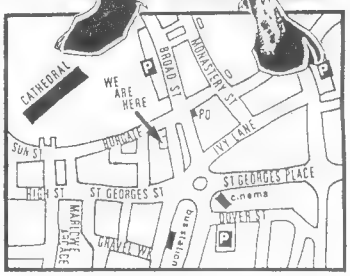

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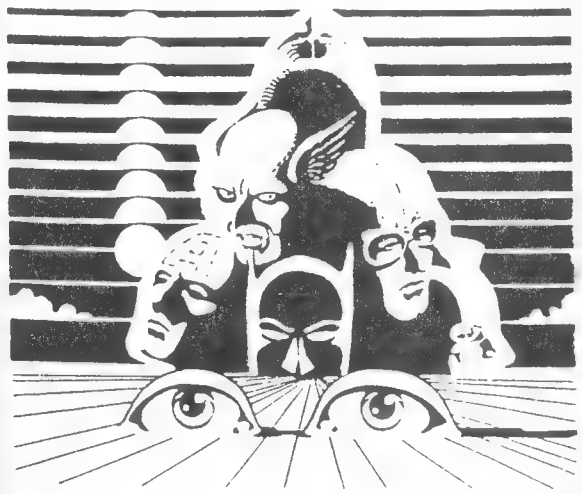

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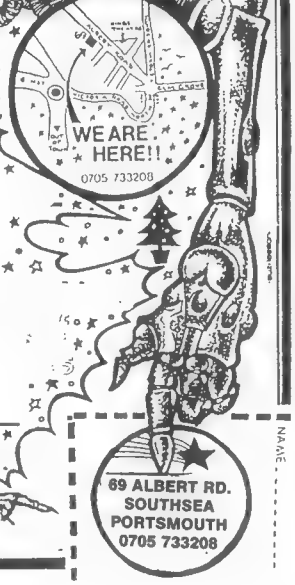

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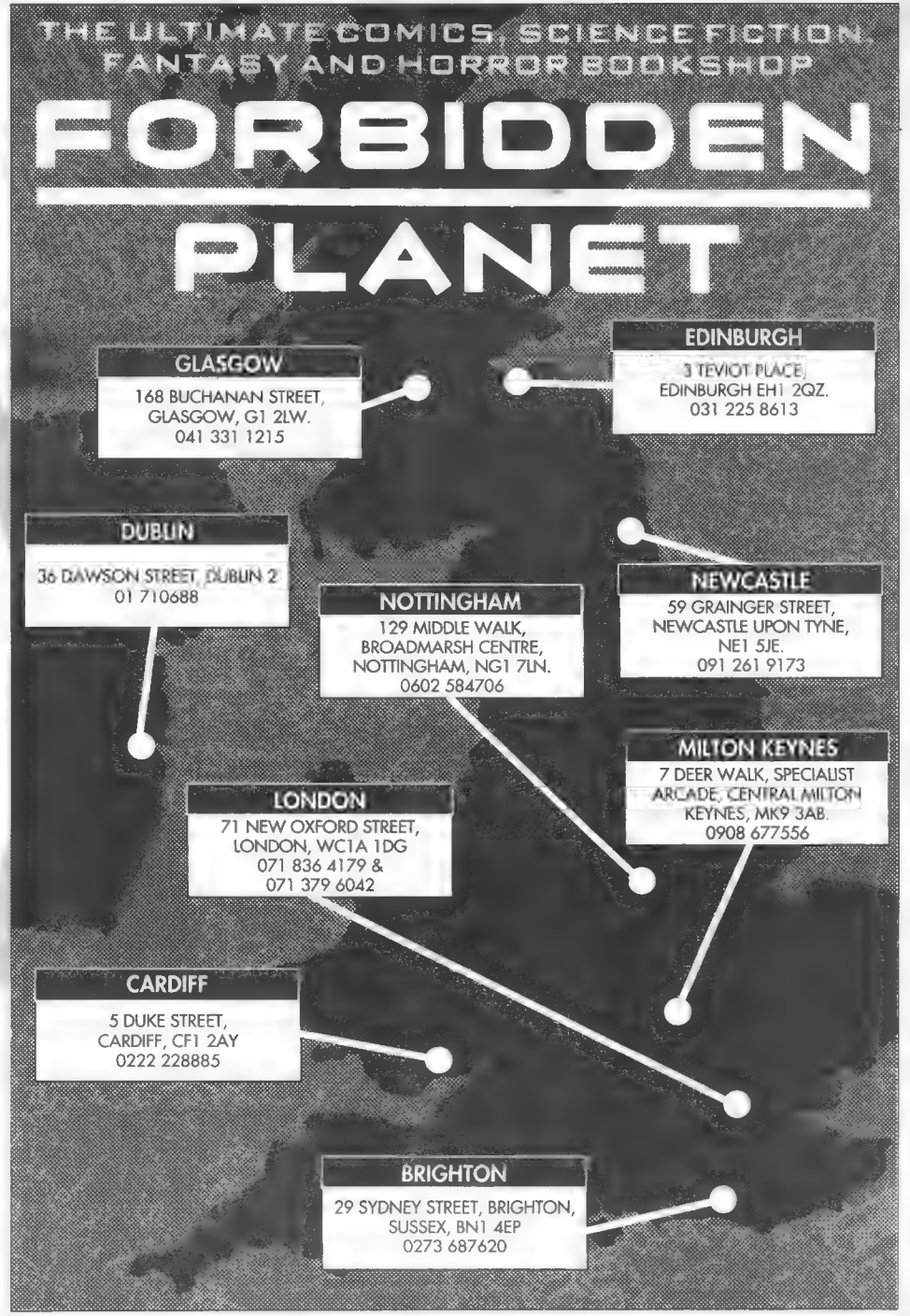
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Collector's Gazette

THE BEANO DIARIES

Ray Moore's long-awaited *Beano Diaries* is one of the publishing events of the 1990's. At last, thanks to Moore's meticulous research, almost every single artist who created the magical characters in the comic that has been part of British culture for over 50 years, has been revealed. The traditional anonymity of British comic creators has stifled the growth of artistic appreciation for individuals whose work we know and over.

The Beano, with its slightly older stablemate, *The Dandy*, redefined comic humour in the 1930's and has subsequently become one of the most collectable titles ever published in the UK. D.C. Thomson's almost Victorian image as a publisher has grown into myth, but no-one can deny that *The Beano* itself was publishing some of the most innovative artists to ever draw for comics.

From its very first issue, with the anthropomorphic Big Eggo on the cover, *The Beano* produced a mixture of text, adventure, and above all humour. From Dudley Watkins masterful pen came the comical Lord Snooty; Morgyn the Mighty flexed his muscles in strip form for the first time; Pansy Potter, the Strongman's Daughter was a star of war-torn Britain, a match for Desperate Dan in everything but cow-pie eating.

The Beano was the home of Jimmy and his Magic Patch, The Shipwrecked Circus, Biffo the Bear and a thousand other dreams.

In the 1950's the new stars arrived: David Law's maniacal Dennis the Menace, Ken Reid's Roger the Dodger and Leo Baxendale's Minnie the Minx led the revolution, the seeds from which even Britain's current crop of adult humour comics grew. The Bash Street Kids, the hapless Jonah, the costumed crimefighter, Billy the Cat – all are carefully catalogued by Moore, cross-referenced to other appearances and indexed by title and artist.

Background information is given for each year of the comic's first 51 years, noting the arrival and departure of artists and editors. This is a perfect companion to Moore's earlier *The Dandy Monster Index* and a must for anyone who collects or remembers the *Bean*.

The *Beano Diaries*, by Ray Moore (British Comic World, 1991, viii + 191pp in two softcover volumes). Limited edition of 281 numbered copies. ***Order from Alan and David Coates, 12 Inglehurst Gardens, Redbridge, Ilford, Essex IG4 5HD. Price £18.95 inclusive of postage and packing.***

FRAZETTA IN SOTHEBY'S SHOC

World famous auction house Sotheby's held the first ever sale of American comic books and original comic art in New York on December 18 1991.

Most of the 352 lots were comic books in high grade condition from the 30's to the 60's, but there were also plenty of original covers and pages, from Joseph Shuster's Superman to Steve Ditko's Spider-Man.

Prices were high for most collector's pockets, and a quarter of the lots failed to reach their minimum estimated bids and were not sold, but those that did sell set records well above the expected price ranges. Historical significance seemed to have less influence on bidders than condition and the current popularity of characters, especially Batman and Spider-Man. For example, the first issue of *Action Comics*, *Marvel Comics*, *Superman* and *Captain America* were all outstripped by *Detective Comics No. 27*, the first appearance of Batman in 1939, which went for $50,000.

More surprising were the prices paid for Silver Age key issues, including a near mint issue of *Spider-Man No. 1* (1963), which shot up to $14,000, twice the price paid for *Fantastic Four No. 1*. The *X-Men* also attracted many bidders, with a near mint selection of 33 issues fetching $12,000.

The auction also established the real collectability of original artwork from comic books. The most expensive item was Frank Frazetta's oil painting for the cover of *Vampirella No. 1*, the Warren horror comic, at $70,000. Frazetta's strip originals were also highly coveted, with a seven-page White Indian story fetching $21,000.

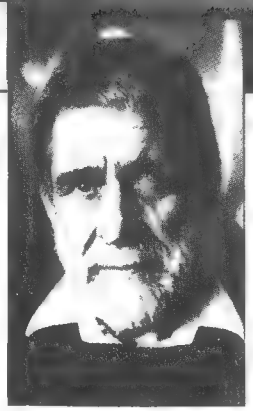
Other complete stories

CLASSIC COVERAGE

The *Eagle Times* is more specifically concerned with the classic British comic, *Eagle*, although its coverage of related material has taken in radio, merchandise and many other topics.

Recent issues have included interviews with Keith Watson and Martin Aitchison, a continuing series of articles about Eagle scriptwriters, such as the recently assessed Charles Chilton, of Journey Into Space and Riders of the Range fame, and rare photographs of the Frank Hampson studio at work.

For further details contact Keith Howard at 25a Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2UA.



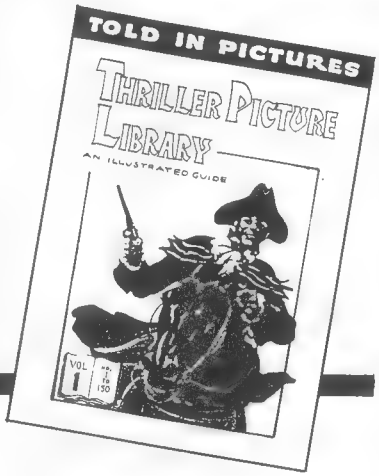
BRYON'S THRILLER

Bryon Whitworth is certainly Britain's busiest amateur publisher when it comes to research material about British comics.

Bryon edits the quarterly *The Comic Journal* which has now reached issue 22, and has a busy schedule of booklets lined up for 1992. Recently released is the third and final volume of *Thriller Picture Library: An Illustrated Guide*, and the *Fleetway Companion* is due to follow shortly.

Further volumes promised include a guide to *Super Detective Library* which will include reproductions of every cover and information on artists and scriptwriters; *Sun* and *Comet* guides, listing characters, artists, scriptwriters and other information, The *Topper* Index compiled by Ray Moore, and many others still in the planning.

An SAE to Bryon at 17 Hill Street, Colne, Lancashire BB8 0DH for more details.



EURO COLLECTION

There are probably more fans of British artist Don Lawrence in Europe than in his home country. Having worked almost exclusively for the European market since 1976, where he is still drawing the adventures of Storm, Lawrence has built up a following which includes fan-clubs in Holland and Germany.

Rob van Bavel is currently publishing *The Don Lawrence Collection*, an annual hard-cover book reprinting Don's best work from Britain and Europe. The 3rd volume contains 100 pages, some in full colour, and reprints (in Dutch) Zeppelin from Tijam Strip/Cartoon Agenda 1984/85, illustrations and covers from the Dutch educational weekly, *Kijk*, and full-length Karl the Viking and Maroc the Mighty adventures from *Lion*.

Rob also publishes *Don Lawrence Magazine* which includes information about Don's work old and new. An international reply coupon should bring further details.

In Germany, Lutz Dietrich produces *Pandarve* on an irregular schedule, 32 glossy pages for DM6.80, featuring news and information about Lawrence and reprints (in German) of British strip work.

Pandarve is currently serialising the most recent (19th) Storm book in full colour.

Rob Van Bavel: Kloosterlan 169, 4811 EE Breda, Nederland.

Lutz Dietrich: DLF Produktion, Postfach 1115, 7530 Pforzheim, Germany.

from the 50's included a *Spirit* episode by Will Eisner for $5,000, and several EC classics, including an Alex Toth *Frontline Combat* tale at $2,500 and a bargain horror story drawn by Ghastly Graham Ingels at only $800.

The most intriguing lots were eight colour pages from *A Christmas Carol*, adapted into a prototype 'graphic novel' by Harvey Kurtzman in 1959 but never published, which went for $9,500. Silver Age highlights included the cover art by Carmine Infantino and Murphy Anderson from *Flash No. 123* (1961), which showed the important revival of the Golden Age Flash. This went for twice its estimate at $16,000. One lot of all twenty pages of *Spider-Man No. 31* by Steve Ditko fetched $22,000.

In the underground comix section, Robert Crumb proved the most popular, with his unused covers for *Zap Comics No. 7* selling for $6,000 and his 'Ode to Harvey Kurtzman' two-pager reaching $4,500. Marvel's mutants set some records for contemporary original art, with Rob Liefeld's *X-Force No. 1* originals at $39,000, and Jim Lee's *X-Men No. 1* pages, plus a new hand-painted original cover piece, at $40,000.

There were a few choice newspaper strips, including Winsor McCay's Little Nemo ($15,000), George Herriman's Krazy Kat ($9,000) and Hal Foster's Prince Valiant ($10,000).

Finally, if you ever wondered what the most valuable fanzine might be, the five issues of *Science Fiction* published by Jerry Siegal in 1933 sold for $12,000. It was in his third issue that Siegel published the story 'The Reign of the Superman' with a cover drawn by his schoolfriend Joseph Shuster, the first printed appearance of the superhero that started it all.

CARTOON TRUST

For those interested in the broad spectrum of art and caricature offered by cartoons, whether it is for Giles, or Max Beerbohm, Punch or Private Eye, the Cartoon Art Trust Society will be of interest.

The Trust is working towards establishing a museum of cartoon art to display a permanent collection and loan exhibition and to offer a reference library of humerous art with an artist's index for fans of cartoon art.

Annual membership entitles you to attend the Society's events, visits to private and national cartoon art collections, special private views, and a thrice-annual newsletter.

Further information and subscription forms are available from: The Cartoon Art Trust Society, 19 Elrington Road, London E8 3BJ. Telephone 071 241 6950.

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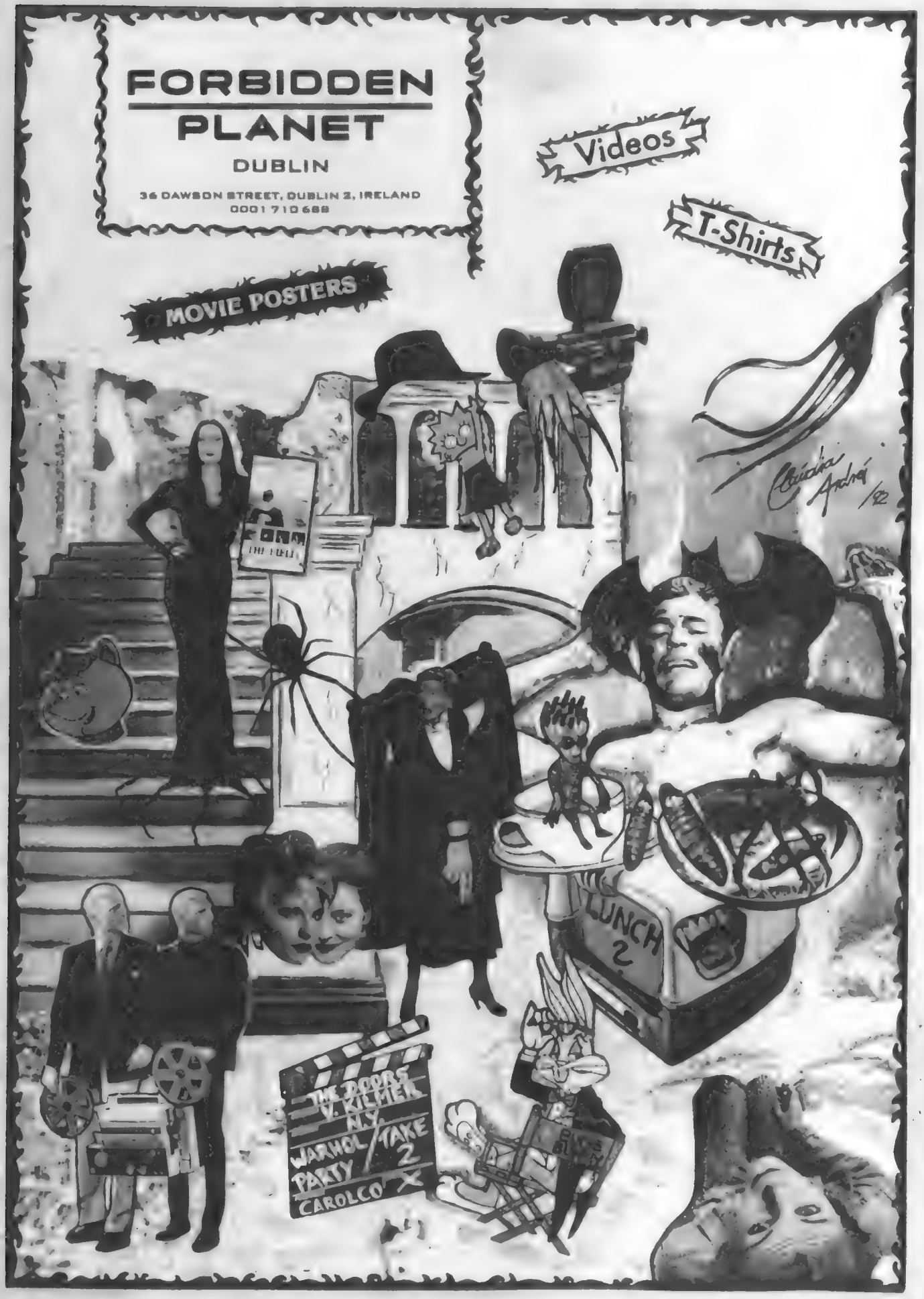
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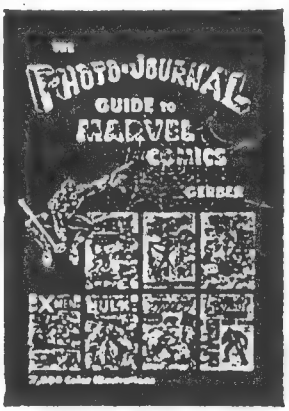

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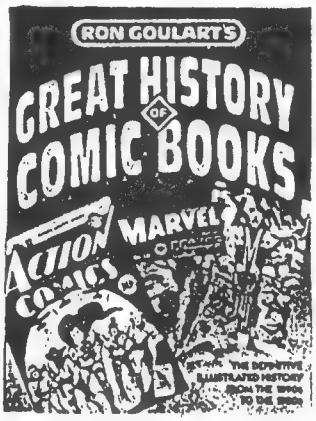

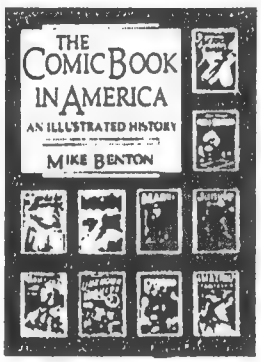

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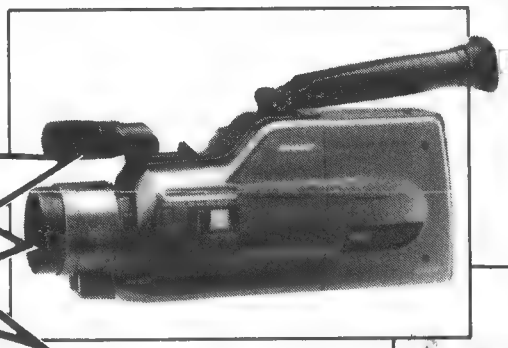

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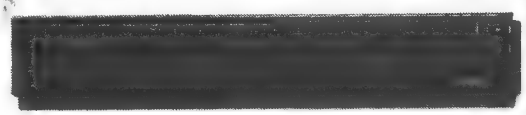

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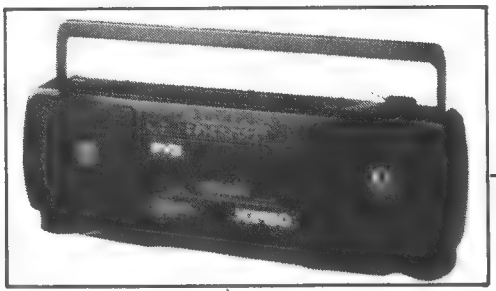

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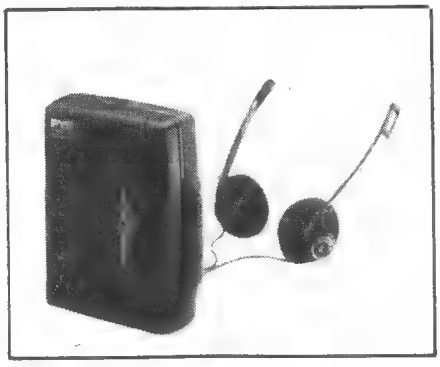

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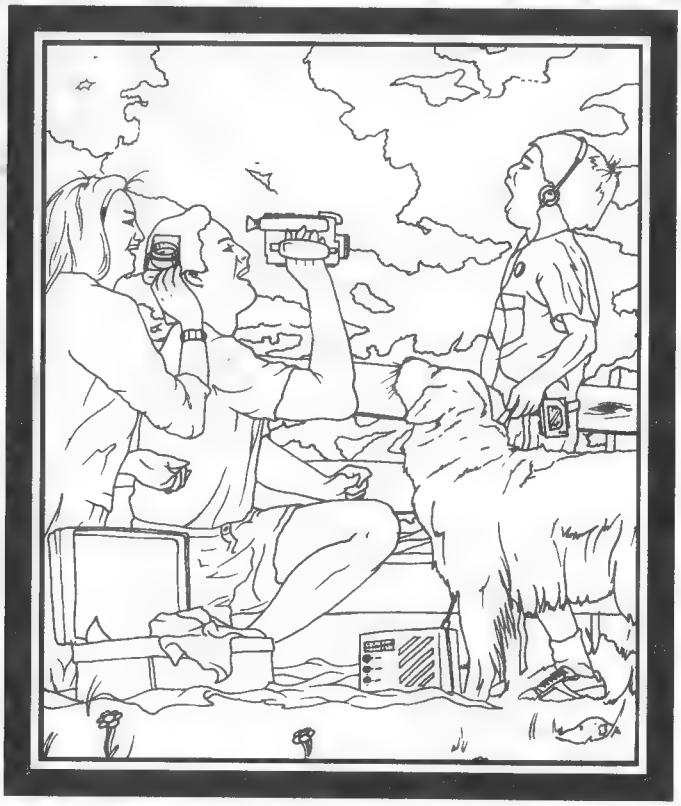

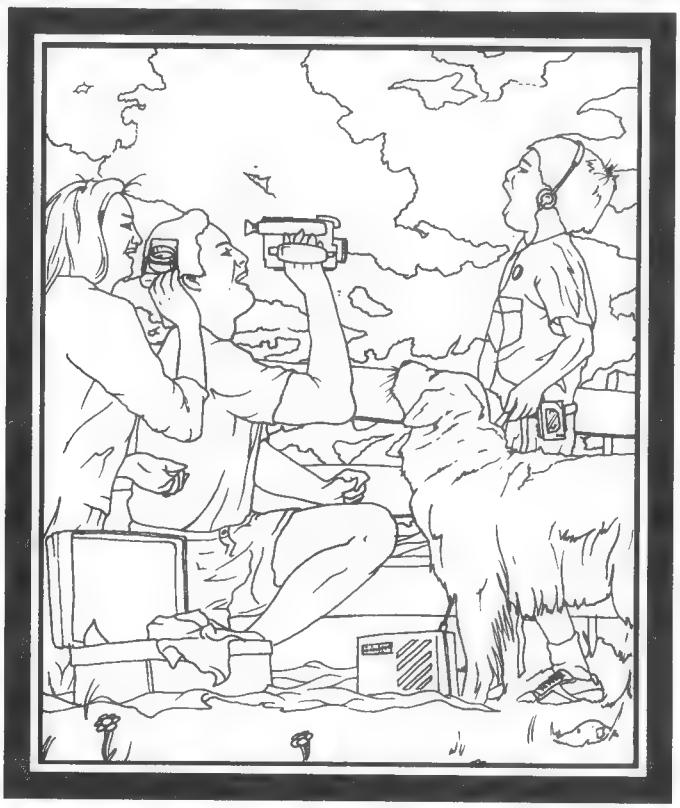

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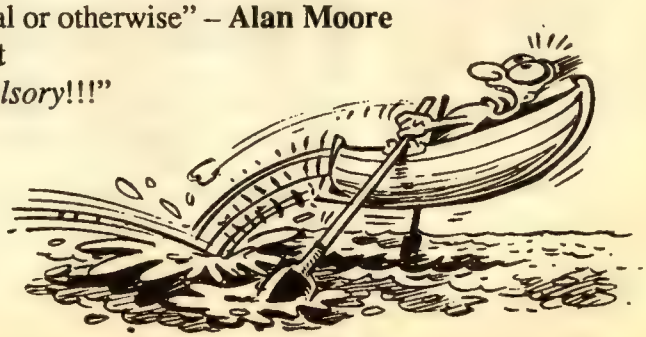

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G.	Good
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P.	Poor
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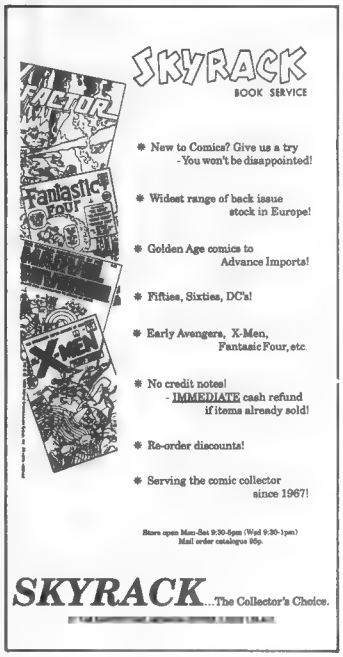
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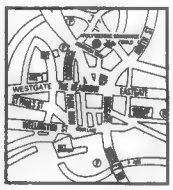

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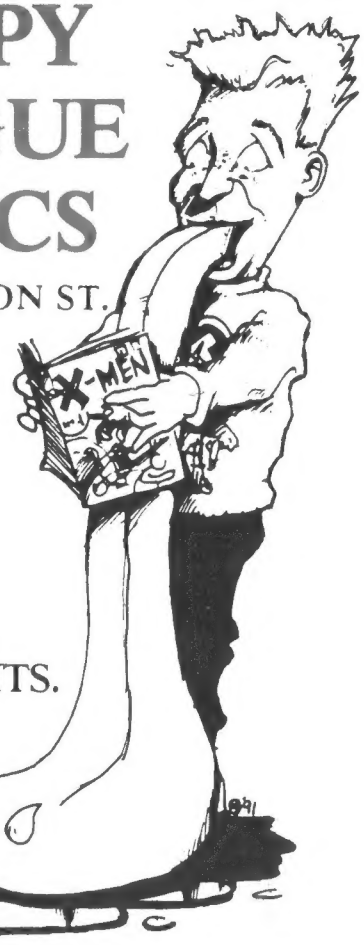

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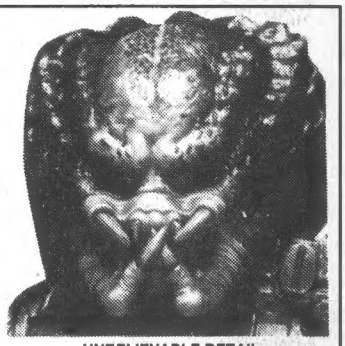

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